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ABSTRACT

This study provides a historical setting for the current interest in preschool education by examining the assumptions and efforts of educators and politicians involved in establishing preschool programs in Boston during the 1830's. Parallels are drawn between the early education experiments detailed here and those undertaken recently, in order to provide a basis for evaluating current problems and establishing future directions. The main concern of the study is the dynamics of the interaction of Boston social elites, educational theorists, public school officials, and a larger body of civic-minded supporters of the schools as revealed in diaries, public and infant school records, and the social data of Boston and Concord from the period. The history of the development, impact, and demise of these early experiments is examined by describing the influence of English social reform precedents on the founding of American infant schools in the mid 1820's, the character and objectives of the early infant schools in Boston, and the conflict over educational assumptions which eventually led to the decline and collapse of support for preschool education by the 1840's. These early efforts apparently were forgotten by the time the kindergarten movement began in the 1860's. Some conclusions are drawn concerning the shifts in attitudes toward early childhood education in the nineteenth century. (ED)

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A RAY OF MILLENNIAL LIGHT: EARLY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM IN THE INFANT SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1826-1840

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ABSTRACT

Pre-school or "infant" education was a major concern of American educators in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The movement spread to the United States from England in the mid-1820s and to Boston in 1828. The dynamics of the interaction of Boston social elites, educational theorists, public school officials, and a larger body of civic-minded supporters of the schools have been our main concern in this study, as revealed in diaries, public and infant school records, and in social data of Boston and Concord from the period.

Educational theorists stimulated interest in infant education, seeing it as a means of introducing progressive pedagogical practices into public schools. Their cause was taken up by social elites who feared that disadvantaged children might not receive sufficient training at home in the civic virtues deemed necessary to sustain a republic. This group solicited funds from a broader-based public of concerned citizens sufficient to establish the schools.

Immediately popular, the schools suffered a fate common among current early education programs. Cultural enrichment of children of the poorer classes was an avowed objective of the schools. But the public was more easily persuaded of the schools' utility through demonstrations of success in teaching very young children the alphabet, arithmetic, recognition of geometrical forms and other learning feats. Success in cultural enrichment was much more difficult to define and demonstrate to the public. The apparent precocity of the pupils created a minor sensation, and private

ABSTRACT

infant schools for the children of the elite sprang up in several parts of the city. Public school officials rejected requests to take the financially-pressed institutions into their own programs, maintaining that the liberal pedagogy of infant schools prepared children poorly for the self-control needed in strictly disciplined public schools. Denied public funding, the schools eked out a bare existence until the publication in 1832 of a popular book on insanity which listed "hothouse education" as a major cause. The civic-minded supporters of the schools turned quickly away and the institutions died for lack of funds. So quickly and wholly were they forgotten that leaders of the Kindergarten movement in the 1860s seemed unaware that an important experiment in early education had preceded their own by a scant three decades.

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CONTENTS

Introduction 1

I. The Development of the European Romantic Tradition in Popular Education 3
II. The English Tradition in Popular Education and its Relationship to the London Social Reform Group 8
III. The Founding of Infant Schools in England and the Fusion of English Practice and European Theory in Education 12
IV. William Russell and the Promotion of the Infant School Movement in America 13
V. The Founding of Infant Schools in Boston 17
VI. The Social Setting for the Infant School Movement in Boston 21
VII. The Character and Objectives of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston 27
VIII. The Effort to Gain Public Support Leads to Misunderstanding 29
IX. The Appeal to the Primary School Committee--A Conflict of Fundamental Assumptions on the Nature of the Infant Mind 33
XI. The Decline of Support for the Infant School Society--Physical Development Against Mental Precocity 39
XII. The Collapse of Support for the Infant School Society--The Schools As a Cause of Insanity 43
XIII. The Case for a Possible Influence of Infant Schools upon Public Practice in Sending Children to School 47
XIV. The Transition to the Kindergarten: A Postscript 53
Notes 56

20005

GRAPHS, CHARTS AND MAPS

GRAPH

1. Percentage of Massachusetts Population in Urban Areas 1790-1860 22
2. Boston's Population 1790-1860 22
3. Boston's Per Capita Expenditures on Public Schools, Institutions and Police, 1818-1860 22
4. Boston's Per Capita Expenditures on Public Schools 36
5. Annual Budgets for the Infant School Society of the City of Boston, 1828-1835 46
6. Percentage of Children Attending Massachusetts Public Schools, 1840-1860 1840-1860 49
7. Percentage of Young Children Attending Concord Public Schools, 1840-1860 1840-1860 50
8. Age Distribution of Students in Concord East Centre District School, 1830-1842 51
9. Percentage of Students Under Four of All Students Under Nine in the Concord East Centre District School 1830-1842 52

CHARTS

1. Evolution of the Infant School System and the Transit to America 16
2. Known Infant Schools in the City of Boston 1828-1835 29

MAPS

1. Approximate Location of Known Infant Schools in the City of Boston 1828-1835 29

00006

INTRODUCTION

The broad purpose of this study has been to provide a much-needed historical setting for the current enthusiasm for pre-school education. By examining the assumptions and efforts of earlier educators and politicians in establishing pre-school programs, we are better able to evaluate our present day activities to provide pre-school education.

At the beginning of the last decade the inability of many disadvantaged children to respond to public school education became increasingly obvious and troublesome. It appeared that such children began school deficient in the cognitive skills, perceptual faculties and emotional attitudes needed to utilize the instruction offered in the school systems. The response to this observation was an acceleration of the efforts by the government and the educators to better understand and act upon the processes of development and learning which take place before the age of six years.

Even before any meaningful consensus had begun to emerge from the disparate and discrete findings of educational researchers, the federal government found it desirable to fund various pre-school education programs such as Head Start. The public interest as well as the amount of federal funds devoted to pre-school education grew rapidly. However, the social and educational consequences of this surge in pre-school education is only gradually being put into its proper perspective. Most of the current evaluations of pre-school programs have focused on the direct benefits to the children under study (such as Westinghouse's evaluation of the

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Head Start Program). Unfortunately, the larger political and societal implications of the entire pre-school education movement have been relatively neglected. An ominous warning of the potential dangers that have yet to be faced by these programs was sounded by Professor Marvin Lazerson of the Harvard School of Education in his article, "Social Reform and Early-Childhood Education: Some Historical Perspectives," Urban Education (April 1970). He suggests that the current enthusiasm for pre-school education is reminiscent of the movement for kindergarten education in the late nineteenth century and that the current program developers of pre-school education might do well to examine the history and results of the kindergarten movement. He fears that unless the current enthusiasm for pre-school education is tempered by an understanding of the fate of earlier educational movements, it is likely to suffer the same dire consequences.

Unfortunately, it appears that many of the proponents of pre-school edcation today are lacking any historical perspective or guidelines. For example, the Committee on Learning and the Educational Processes of the Social Science Research Council sponsored a conference on pre-school education in Chicago in 1966 (most of the papers were subsequently published under the title, Early Education, edited by Robert D. Hess and Roberta M. Bear). Though the conference focused on nearly every practical and theoretical problem of educating pre-school children, it almost entirely neglected to examine the broader questions of this movement as a whole. No mention or analysis was made of how to avoid the mistakes that led to the demise of pre-school education in America during the antebellum period. In fact, it is quite evident from the conference proceedings that these educators were almost totally unaware that any serious, organized efforts had been made in the early nineteenth century to deal with these problems.

A large part of the blame for this state of ignorance of the antecedents of pre-school education must be laid to the educational historians who have neglected to mention the earlier efforts. Thus, Bernard Wishy in his widely read book, The Child and the Republic, only pays scant notice to the efforts of early educators to deal with young children. This neglect of pre-school education by historians is not surprising in view of previous lack of interest in this subject by professional educators before 1960. However, this almost total lack of understanding as to why the earlier effort failed is regretable because it denies us the benefit of that earlier experience.

In fact, "infant education" was a major concern of American educators in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century. The American Journal of Education, from its founding in 1826, promoted infant education as one of its major causes. Articles appearing almost monthly for the rest of the decade considered nearly every problem of early education which concerns us today. Though initially the program was directed at the disadvantaged children in society (particularly through private, charitable schools), it soon caught the public imagination and spread rapidly through the entire public school system. It became quite commonplace for children between the ages of eighteen months and four years to be in public or private schools. For example, in 1840, approximately 10.5 percent of the children under four years of age in Massachusetts were attending public schools.

In the mid-thirties enthusiasm for infant schools in professional journals turned to disillusionment and then outright hostility. Consequently, during the 1840's and 1850's the percentage of children under four in school gradually declined until by 1860 the entire movement was only a memory that was soon to be forgotten.

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There seem to be clear and instructive parallels between this forgotten experiment in early education and our concern for early education today. Our findings suggest that the stimulus for the infant school movement of the 1830's was in some respects similar to the stimulus which led to Head Start in the 1960's--a fear that disadvantaged children might not receive sufficient preparation at home to be able to profit from the public schools when they entered at the age of five or six. In addition, the stress on infant education in the early nineteenth century apparently fed upon a conscious desire to remove the children from an environment which was seen to be conducive to bad health and morals and which failed to inculcate the civic virtues deemed necessary to sustain a republic. Similar objectives, though not always made explicit, seem to be sustaining the infant education movement of today.

Controversy raged among advocates of infant schools over whether the schools were to begin the formal educational process or were merely to provide a pleasant environment conducive to emotional stability and stimulation of the sensory apparatus through pictures, colorful objects and clapping and marching games.

Some critics of the schools developed a maturational hypothesis, suggesting that different types of learning were appropriate to different stages in physical maturation. In their view, efforts to confine children to the tasks of learning letters or numbers prematurely would be futile and even harmful. They either condemned the schools entirely or proposed more careful efforts to coordinate the method and content of teaching in view of the changing capabilities of the developing child. Others suggested that the home environment, however bad, provided an emotional security which no school, however bright, clean, and well-managed, could replace.

The theory and practice of these nineteenth century educators seems to have been the product of impressions gathered in practical experience in the classroom or adapted from the work of an occasional towering figure such as Pestalozzi. Yet the modern educator will recognize ideas similiar to those which William Fowler, Cynthia and Martin Deutsch, Sheldon H. White or F. Riessman have developed through sophisticated experimental methods.

This study of infant education in Massachusetts in the early nineteenth century should help us bring our present concerns and objectives as Americans and educators into sharper perspective. The insights here gained would help us to better answer for ourselves the questions we have asked of the past: What has led to a concern for early education? What are to be the goals of early education? How can these goals best be achieved? How does our approach to early education reveal our conception of early childhood, the maturational and learning processes, and the larger goals of education in our society? What factors are likely to lead to success and continuence of disappointment and cessation of our interest in early education?

All our efforts, however we limit our particular research, are directed towards answering these broader questions. And it is precisely at this level that American educators who experienced a wave of infant education from trough to peak to trough in the early nineteenth century have the most to say to us.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

We have confined our investigation of infant education to Boston in the antebellum period for several reasons:

1) Massachusetts was a pioneer in America in infant education and its educators were unusually interested in recording their experiences and observations.

2) Massachusetts has an unusually complete and detailed set of educational statistics (due to the diligence of Horace Mann).

3) We already had available considerable supplementary statistical data on IBM cards for Massachusetts during this period due to Maris Vinovskis's thesis project, "The Demographic Development of Massachusetts before 1860."

We have examined the attitude of professional educators toward infant education through their published works--particularly in journals such as the American Journal of Education. Using these sources we have attempted to ascertain their various ideas and document their changing views over time.

By using the detailed local school reports collected by the Massachusetts Board of Education, it has been possible to analyze the reaction of elected school officials and parents to the suggestions of professional educators on infant education. Furthermore, the availability of school enrollment data, school expenditures, length of the school year, etc. has permitted a detailed statistical analysis of the trends in infant education at the local level in the town of Concord

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and for some infant schools in Boston. General social data on Boston has been gathered and analyzed in attempt to assess the levels of public concern for problems related to urban poverty, including the need for supplemental early education among the poorer classes.

In addition, as much as possible, an attempt has been made to investigate in detail the development of infant education in the city and the public reaction to it as ascertained through the school committee records, infant school society reports, and the newspaper accounts.

An effort has been made to investigate the causes of the changing attitudes and behavior toward infant education among the different groups with particular attention to the relationship of the views of the professional educators and the public officials.

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CONCLUSIONS

The authors have felt it most appropriate to present their study in a largely narrative form. Important considerations on the societal implications of early education programs are contained in each section and their application to present-day early education programs will be obvious to the reader. Nevertheless, a few general observations which emerge from the study could perhaps be summarized here.

Proponents of publically financed early education are likely to face opposition from two constituencies. Large segments of the population continue to hold neo-Romantic notions about the sacredness of the family as the primary perpetuator of cultural values and guarantor of emotional stability in young children. They will regard early education programs as potentially destructive to home and family life. (They will be joined in the twentieth century by a significant minority of parents who fear that early education programs will sever the ties which bind their children to parental cultural values.) Secondly, public school officials will refuse to accept such schools into their own programs, partly because they oppose the liberal pedagogy which, perforce, must be used with the very young, and partly because they are reluctant to expand the burden of public education which they already bear.

Proponents of early education will find themselves forced to defend the utility of their programs with two main arguments. Early education is remedial, in that it gives children of the poor a "head start" in laying the foundation of essential knowledge and skills needed to compete

in public schools with children of parents who have provided these essentials in the home. Or, early education is remedial in that it provides the social skills and cultural enrichment necessary to permit the children to take advantage later of learning opportunities in the public schools. If early education teachers concentrate on learning skills the public will be impressed with the precocity of children and the likelihood of public funding is enhanced. (More wealthy parents will no doubt found separate similar schools for their own children.) The institutions will find themselves vulnerable to attack from those who feel that social maturation is most important in pre-school years and that the home environment accomplishes this most advantageously.

If early education teachers concentrate on free play and cultural enrichment they will find it difficult to attract public funds from a society which expects specific tangible gains for tax dollars spent. Cultural enrichment is far more difficult to define and demonstrate to taxpayers than is precocity in learning skills. The wholly-defensible argument that early education accomplishes both of these objectives will not diminish the vulnerability from attack from either side.

In view of these considerations, the likelihood of early education programs being funded on a widespread and continuing basis from public revenues is not great. Perhaps more viable would be programs to provide mothers, or a single mother within a neighborhood with the materials and skills needed to conduct a home "infant school." It might be helpful in such a program to avoid the word "school" altogether. One suspects a significant factor in the success of Kindergartens as opposed to infant schools was the neutrality of the German word. Childrens' neighborhood home centers might attract public funds and realize with a minimum of

dissonance, what the proponents of early education have, since the 1820's hoped to accomplish in providing cultural and educational aids for disadvantaged children.

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A RAY OF MILLENNIAL LIGHT:

EARLY EDUCATION AND SOCIAL REFORM IN

THE INFANT SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1826-1840

> But a ray of millennial light has shone on us, and reveals a way in which poverty, with all its attendant evils--moral, physical, and intellectual, may be banished from the world.
>
> From the 5th Annual Report of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston, 1834.

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There was little restraint in the enthusiasm with which the editors of the Boston Recorder and Religious Transcript reported an 1829 demonstration by children of a Boston Infant School:

> Infants, taken from the most unfavorable situations in which they are ever placed, from the abodes of poverty and vice, are capable of learning at least a hundred times as much, a hundred times as well, and of being a hundred times as happy, by the system adopted in infant schools, as by that which prevails in the common schools throughout the country. The conclusion most interesting to every friend of education is, that the infant school system can be extended through every department of the popular education. And that in any school district where there is interest and liberality enough to raise Ten Dollars to procure apparatus, a beginning can be made the present season.[1]

The objects of this enthusiasm, the infant schools, were religious and educational institutions intended to provide instruction for children of the poor from the ages of about 18 months to the earliest age when public institutions would accept them. They were founded and underwritten by civic-minded persons in Europe and America during the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century.

The first important infant school was founded by Robert Owen in 1816 at New Lanark.[2] Owen's example was followed up in 1818 when an eminent group of English reformers (including such notables as Henry Peter Brougham, James Mill, Zachary Macaulay, and Joseph Wilson) who founded a school on Brewer's Green, Westminister. Another infant school was organized in the Spitalfields section of London shortly thereafter, and in July 1824 these same reformers founded the Infant School Society and began to solicit public subscriptions to support the institutions. Within a year, at least 55 infant schools were in operation in various parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland.[3]

Americans, always sensitive to reform movements in England, quickly picked up the idea. In February 1827 plans were laid in

Hartford, Connecticut for the first infant school in America. In May of that same year an Infant School Society was founded in New York City and the organization of such societies in Philadelphia and other American cities quickly followed.[4]

The infant school movement spread to Massachusetts in 1828. In June of that year infant schools were opened on Pleasant Street and Salem Street by two different infant school societies. Within a few months infant education had become a favorite cause among many reform-minded citizens of Boston. In October the first of several private infant schools for the children of the better classes was founded and an infant school for African children was established in 1830. The idea spread rapidly to a number of other towns in the Commonwealth including Salem, Worcester, Concord, Haverhill, and Charlestown. But Boston's efforts in the infant education movement ~~was~~ were particularly ~~concerned~~ important as an inspiration to other communities as well as a guide. ~~which~~ In 1830 twenty young ladies from various parts of the state visited the Bedford Street School in Boston for a two or three week period in order to prepare themselves to become instructresses in infant schools in their home communities.[5]

The peak of public enthusiasm for the new institutions was reached in the early 1830's. The middle of that decade, however, saw a drastic decline in that enthusiasm. By the end of 1835 almost all public comment on infant schools in Massachusetts had ceased and the activities of the once-flourishing infant school societies quickly ended. In fact, infant schools seem in subsequent years to have faded not only from public memory, but even from the recollections of some of those who had actively participated in the movement. When kindergartens became popular in the 1860's and 1870's in Massachusetts, they were greeted as a new and unique European contribution to the cause of public education in America with almost no association with the infant education movement of some three decades earlier.[6]

The infant school movement provides an ideal opportunity to study the dynamics of an educational reform effort. The

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interaction of theorists of educational reform, social reformers, civic-minded social elites, public school officials, and the general public buffeted the movement in directions which none of the groups alone would have planned. Their attitudes toward infant schools and their differing expectations of what the schools would accomplish for society also influenced the early successes and the abrupt decline of the movement.

Though the public enthusiasm for the infant education movement lasted only a few years, the short duration does not diminish its significance to the social historian. The discussion of infant schools focused public attention upon the importance of the period of human infancy and stimulated a vigorous re-examination of the social institutions which relate most directly to infants. Particular attention was given to the role in the infant's life of the family and the school. These considerations gave rise to questions about the role of women in society, as mothers, students, and teachers. A unique aspect of this study is the opportunity to begin the exploration of these issues at different levels of society.

It is obvious that it is impossible to discuss all of the issues raised by the infant education movement at this time. In this paper we will attempt to explain the major ideas and the considerations which led to the founding of the infant schools; to trace the attitudes and interactions of the local groups involved in the establishment of these schools; to show how confusion as to objectives and purposes of the schools and the lack of unanimity within and among the groups led to the decline of the schools at the very time when changing social conditions made the needs they were designed to meet more pressing than ever; and tentatively to suggest that infant education might have been a major factor in encouraging parents to send their children at a very young age to the public schools even after the infant education movement had faded from the scene.

I. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN ROMANTIC TRADITION IN POPULAR EDUCATION

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The infant school system, as evolved by educators in England, was an attempt to fuse two major European traditions of educational theory and practice. Much of the difficulty in making viable institutions of the infant schools in America arose from the fact that the two traditions led the sponsoring groups to work at cross purposes in their promotion of the schools.

The first of these traditions was developed on the continent from foundations laid by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) with the publication of Emile in 1762. Rousseau proposed two major innovations in Emile. Viewing human society as essentially corrupt, he stressed the idea that the role of education should be primarily that of encouraging the young mind to shake off the impositions of the old society and arrive at its own conclusions as to what was worthy of its study and attentions. Education is not the transmission of a body of knowledge from master to pupil, but rather a process of freeing the pupil's mind to explore the world on its own. Rousseau was proposing that the best education was that which would insulate the pupil from the evil influences of a corrupt society, teaching him, instead of a body of received knowledge, the skills needed to understand the world as nature would have him understand.

This reinterpretation of the goals, and indeed of the very process of learning, was to be of critical importance for the future of western educational institutions and practices. The new educational process had at its core the idea that the child should not be heir of the culture which fostered him, but should learn skills needed to help him develop and live harmoniously in a culture entirely different from that of his fathers. The advocates of infant education were to be similarly concerned with the role of education in the transmission of culture, though with variations which greatly tempered the radical implications of Rousseau's teachings.

The second major innovation of Rousseau was his division of youth into three periods and his contention that specific aspects of the child's total educational experience were appropriate to each period in the child's development. For example, before the age of five---a period when the senses are most important---education

should consist of exposing the senses to as great a variety of concrete experience as possible. Other stages of development between the ages of five and thirteen, and then after the age of thirteen, followed the education appropriate to each period by being keyed to the receptivity of the child's physical, sensory, and intellectual apparatus at that particular time. The key idea was that children are not young adults, as Rousseau accused Locke of teaching, but rather are developing individuals whose education must be appropriately attuned to their stages of development.

Aspects of these two fundamental ideas were further developed in a long series of educational experiments carried out by various proponents of educational reform during the next hundred years. Johann Bernhard Basedow (1723-90) established his famous Philanthropium at Dessau in 1774, a boarding school which stressed the importance of stimulating the use of the reasoning faculties rather than of memory in the educational process. Gotthilf Salzmann (1744-1811) added the idea of isolation from town environment, locating his school in the country where the pupils would be as close as possible to the stimulating influence of nature. Friedrich Eberhard Von Rochow (1734-1805) extended the new principles for the first time to the children of the poor on his estate at Reckahn, near Berlin. In this he anticipated Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1745-1827), the great Swiss educator, whose series of Institutes, the most famous at Yverdun, became places of pilgrimage for educational reformers from all over Europe.[7]

Through many years of close observation of the manner in which peasant women teach their children, Pestalozzi sought to separate the learning process into its simplest and most fundamental parts. He then proposed to teach young children these most fundamental ideas and then gradually extend their training to more complex concepts. He was very interested in the infant mind, the first of these followers of Rousseau to be so. He recommended the use of pictures and natural objects to broaden the infant's vocabulary at the earliest possible age, thus building a storehouse of materials which the children would later learn to order and to

manipulate at will. However, he never advocated the establishment of institutions where infants would be taught by his methods as the advocates of infant schools were to do. The home was sacred and inviolable in Pestalozzi's view and the mother the only appropriate teacher of the infant.[8]

Another Swiss reformer, Philipp Emmanuel von Fellenberg (1771-1844) sought to combine the principles which his predecessors had employed with the exposure of students to the new principles of agricultural reform and to the manual labor of country life. His assistant Johann Jakob Wehrli (1790-1855) helped him develop his estate at Hofwyl into a major complex of educational institutions which included a very popular training school for teachers from abroad. William Woodbridge (1794-1845), who succeeded William Russell (1798-1873) as editor of the American Journal/ (Annals) of Education in 1830, began to advocate the ~~introduction~~ manual training schools in America after an extended stay at Hofwyl . His stress upon the importance of physical development was to be an influence in the decline of enthusiasm for infant education as practiced in Boston.

Most of these contintental reformers had visited the schools of at least one other member of this group and though each had distinctive ideas which he sought to emphasize and develop, they agreed on some general principles. All shared an implicit rejection of the old society and had a desire to isolate the children from the harmful influences of that society. This desire found expression in the fact that the schools were physically isolated from centers of population and were run as boarding schools where the master could hope to control the whole environment. This effort to control the entire environment was to be of great importance to the moral reformers of the infant school movement, but with quite a different objective than the freedom advocated by the European innovators.

Since the old society could not be a source of educational principles, the Europeans sought to elicit proper principles from the study of nature. There was a revulsion against force of any kind and a general feeling that if the childrens' senses

were sufficiently exposed to a natural world about them the children themselves would begin to ask question and explore the world in their own way. To promote this process, the master was to study how the most simple and least corrupted people sought to educate themselves and their children and then derive methods which would simulate the way these most natural of people went about the process of education. In all there was an emphasis upon the necessity of a balance between physical, moral, and intellectual development. And each reformer stressed that certain teaching methods were appropriate to certain stages of development and that it was unnatural and hence wrong to try to thwart nature by attempting teachings that were not properly keyed to the stage of development of a child at any particular time.

It should be emphasized that none of these educators advocated the founding of institutions established specifically for children under the age of four or five as the proponents of infant education did. Given the common effort to remove the children from environments which might contaminate them, one might have expected some of these continental reformers to advocate the removal of children to a more rational environment as early as possible. But here their distrust of old society and their love of nature ran into logical difficulties. It seemed obvious to them that early in a child's life parents are the most important conveyors of the values and the norms and that their teachings will most likely be those of the old society. But to remove infants from their home, from the loving care of the mother and the family, would have violated their rule of strict adherence to nature.

Pestalozzi, as has been noted, was the major student of the perceptual and learning faculties of infants. He concluded that children could begin to learn at a very early age, but that all such learning should take place in the home under the mother's influence. Pestalozzi's work suggested that girls and mothers should be given every opportunity to learn the new and progressive educational principles so that they might apply them to their own

children. And in fact the emphasis on "female education," "maternal instruction," and "fireside education", so common in the early half of the nineteenth century in America as well as Europe, derived in part from Pestalozzi's ideas.[9]

But what if some parents were not capable of sufficient enlightenment to render them fit teachers of their infant offspring as the advocates of the infant schools contended? The fact that the European educational reformers of this period provided no answer to such a question suggests either that they felt that the infant was not sufficiently impressionable to have irreversible harm done to him in an unenlightened home or that the development of qualities of natural affection and love was the most significant part of the educational process at this age and that even an unenlightened mother could accomplish this better than the most enlightened schoolmaster. In any case, it is clear that a romantic, tender regard for the natural home environment made its preservation for the infant more important than whatever gains could be made in reforming the old society by removing the child from home at so early an age. In England quite a different tradition ~~came to prevail.~~ dominated educational reform.

II. THE ENGLISH TRADITION IN POPULAR EDUCATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO THE LONDON SOCIAL REFORM GROUP

The first striking aspect of the English educational tradition is the fact that the English produced almost no educators of the renown of Pestalozzi or de Fellenberg until the effects of industrialization and urbanization began to be felt late in the eighteenth century. The only educational innovations in England in the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth century were the Sunday School movement which began in 1780 and the Lancastrian/Bell system of monitorial instruction which began in the first decade of the nineteenth century.[10] Both the Lancastrian/Bell system and the Sunday School movement were practical reforms

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designed to extend at least a modicum of education to the lower classes at the least possible cost. They did not involve new concepts as to what the content of that education should be. Nor did the English reformers advocate special teaching methods based upon novel conceptions of the infant mind as the continental reformers did.

The first major educational innovation in England in the early nineteenth century was a part of Robert Owen's New Institution at New Lanark. The principles which underlay the school, which was part of the Institution, were expressed by Owen in his New View of Society where he recommended that:

> the governing powers of all countries should establish rational plans for the education and general formation of the characters of their subjects. ---These plans must be devised to train children from their earliest infancy in good habits of every description (which will of course prevent them from acquiring those of falsehood and deception). They must afterwards be rationally educated, and their labour be usefully directed. Such habits and education will impress them with an active and ardent desire to promote the happiness of every individual, and that without the shadow of exception for sect, or party, or country, or climate.[11]

One cannot help noting in statements such as this that English educators of the period imparted to the European revulsion against existing society a novel twist. Locke's view of man as a blank page upon which sensory experience imprints everything seems to be a necessary precursor to Rousseau's faith that a man educated in isolation from society will have a greater chance of being free from its harmful irrational influences. But at this point the two lines of thought diverge. Rousseau and the followers in his tradition displayed a pronounced scepticism as to the wisdom of any man's determining exactly what should replace the teachings of the old society. Their great stress upon freedom and upon nature was another way of saying that their hopes for society rested upon the faith that

man, if free, would naturally do what is right. In the English tradition there is an unmistakable tendency to what one can only call smugness. Even so thoroughgoing a critic of existing society as Robert Owen did not doubt that enlightened men could create a new and better society through consciously shaping the character of the new generation from infancy.

By 1830 Owen had come to regret the £30 he had contributed to the Infant School Society of London at its founding in 1824. But this difference with the other patrons of the schools lay only in his conception of what the new society should be. Neither Owen nor the other patrons placed their emphasis upon freeing the infant mind to understand and order the world according to innate capacities as the Europeans did. The English reformers wanted to educate children out of the evils of the old society only to bring them to their own conceptions of a better new society. Freedom, for them, did not become a value in itself. Owen's criticism of the London infant schools makes his point of departure from the other patrons quite clear:

> The present Infant Schools which you support and patronize are evidence of your good intentions, and also of the vicious circumstances in which you are involved. They are, in very many instances, a mockery or caricature of the original school, and have no pretensions to be considered, as that school was intended to be, the first practical step towards a rational system of education; or, in other words, a new arrangement of circumstances in which to place children, as nearly approximating to virtuous and rational circumstances as the ignorance of the present vicious system will admit.[12]

Brougham and his colleagues had immediately recognized the value of Owen's infant school as an instrument for reform. But there was no need, in their view, to reform the whole of society as Owen had hoped. They appropriated Owen's instrument for reforming the whole of society and used it as a device for reforming only those elements of society which they deemed in

30027

need of reform. And of course their own middle-class Protestant society provided the principles which were to form the character of the infant poor. The important point, here, however, is that Owen and ~~the other patrons of~~ the other patrons of the infant schools had clear, if different, conceptions of what the reformed infants should be like, and had no doubt of their ability, if given control of the children of the poor at an early age, to effect the desired transformation of character. Education was not to free the young mind but to make sure it was bound by the proper principles.

An understanding of the differences between the English and European conceptions of the role of popular education in reforming society is critical to understanding the infant school movement in America. The end of the Napoleonic wars increased English contacts with the European developments and very quickly the Lockean view of the infant mind as perfectly open and malleable began to be tempered by the European conceptions, especially those of Pestalozzi which taught that infancy was a special period in human life and that the infant mind quite wilfully displayed aptitudes and limitations peculiar to itself. It followed that special teaching techniques were needed to make learning at so early an age possible. Pestalozzi had given much thought to the development of teaching techniques appropriate to the infant mind but insisted, as he wrote to one of his English disciples, J.P. Greaves, that "...if our gift is to be accepted, it must be conveyed through the medium of maternal love."[13] Teachers of infant schools in England ignored Pestalozzi's remonstrances against the use of his techniques outside of the home and adopted them into what they were to call the "system" of infant education---a pastiche which attempted to incorporate Owen's Institution, the moral reform hopes of the Brougham group, the Lancastrian techniques of mutual instruction, and the pedagogical principles of Pestalozzi.

For Americans the tracts and manuals which these men wrote to

30828

promote the cause of infant education were the major source of ideas and information on both why and how to set up infant schools of their own. Large sections of the writings of Samuel Wilderspin, instructor of the Spitalfields Infant School, and J.P. Goyder, superintendant of the infant school in Bristol, were published in New York in 1827 by Joanna Bethune under the title, Infant Education; or Remarks on the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor, from the Age of Eighteen Months to Seven Years. This little book of 108 pages was widely circulated and became a major influence upon the infant school movement in America. But it was not the only influence and the timing and the character of subsequent influences is of major importance. Ideas concerning infant instruction were given their first and strongest impulse in America through the medium of the English idea of infant schools. But Americans visiting the continent were soon to notice that in Europe the home environment was regarded as the proper place for the application of the new principles. This "second wave" of ideas concerning infant instruction was to emphasize home and mother and would reinforce other factors which were to diminish enthusiasm for the infant school movement within a few years.

III. THE FOUNDING OF INFANT SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND THE FUSION OF ENGLISH PRACTICE AND EUROPEAN THEORY IN EDUCATION

The discussions which attended the meeting at Freemason's hall in London which led to the founding of the Infant School Society in 1824 underline the fact that in England the infant schools were perceived as a means of dealing with pressing social problems. However far-reaching were the designs of Robert Owen, when he founded the first infant school at New Lanark, it is strikingly obvious that the schools were a perfect answer to problems created by the factory system of production. With children safely in school, mothers and older children were freed to work in the factories. This consideration was not lost upon those who spoke at the meeting at Freemason's hall, though they emphasized,

in this context, the positive advantage to the family of the incremental income of working mothers rather than the value to factory owners of the increased labor supply. But it is obvious from the discussions that the growth of an urban pauper class was the major problem which occupied the minds of the London reformers. The meeting abounded with tales of Fagin-like criminals who kept large numbers of impoverished vagrant children in their employ as thieves and pickpockets. The crime which resulted from urban poverty, as dramatized by a recent conviction of an eight year old for a capital offense, was clearly uppermost in the minds of the London patrons of infant schools.[14]

The sequence of events which led to the founding of the London Infant School Society is significant. Brougham, and his constituency of civic-minded reformers, saw in Owen's fundamental idea of sending infants to school a possible means of ameliorating social problems caused by urbanization and industrialization. The instructors they hired soon found that the management of several dozen infants was no easy task. In their search for ideas and techniques which might prove useful in an infant school, they turned to the European tradition we have described, especially the work of Pestalozzi. They were the first to apply Pestalozzian principles for the teaching of infants in an institutional setting. In the process of working out a practical combination of Owen's idea of infant schools and Pestalozzi's principles of teaching infants, they created what they were to commonly call the infant school system.

IV. WILLIAM RUSSELL AND THE PROMOTION OF THE INFANT SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN AMERICA

The early advocacy of infant schools in America coincided with the emergence of a group of educators and public-minded citizens sufficiently large to sustain publications which specialized in the discussions of the theory and practice of public education.

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Before 1826 only three journals exclusively concerned with education had been published in this country. During the next two and one-half decades over sixty magazines and papers devoted exclusively to education were established.[15]

The first journal to contribute significantly to this flowering of interest in educational theories and reforms was William Russell's American Journal of Education which was published in Boston from 1826 through 1830 under his editorship and then continued as the Annals of American Education ~~under 1830~~ under the editorship of William C. Woodbridge ~~to~~ until 1836 and then under William A. Alcott ~~for the last three years~~. Russell's position on infant education was made abundantly clear when he commented on the subject in his opening editorial in 1826:

> There seems to us to be no danger of beginning instruction too soon, if it is begun in the right way, and with expectations sufficiently moderate.... Within a few years public sentiment has undergone a favorable change on the subject of early education.... The establishment of infant schools we look upon as one of the most important epochs in the history of education. We shall use every endeavor to render this subject familiar to the minds of our readers by communicating all the information we can procure regarding the details of the system and its progress abroad and at home.[16]

Through the rest of his editorship William Russell did not fail to make good on his promise. Nearly every issue of the Journal for the rest of the decade contained articles advocating or reporting the progress of infant schools in Boston and in other parts of the country.

Russell was the chief figure in that group which we have chosen to call the theorists of educational reform. There can be little doubt that his popular journal was a major influence in building the sentiments which led to the founding of the first Infant School Societies two years after the first issue of his journal appeared. Born in Scotland and trained at Glascow

under Professor George Jardine, Russell was one of the first to begin teaching in America the combination of traditional English educational theory and the new European doctrines which had begun to influence educators in England.[17]

In Boston the sequence of events leading to the establishment of infant schools was almost precisely the reverse of the process in England. William Russell's attentions were drawn early to the infant school system by the publications of Samuel Wilderspin, William Wilson, and other teachers of infant schools in Britain. The system thus came to America more or less intact, where theorists of educational reform such as Russell were quick to notice its novelty and its possible applications in the American setting. However, Boston already had over 50 primary schools in operation---schools which accepted children as young as four years old. Given the relative availability of educational opportunity for even the very young of all classes of society, Russell's enthusiasm for the infant school system was understandably placed more upon the pedagogical theories than upon the idea of creating new institutions. Certainly he advocated the establishment of infant schools, but he saw them primarily as pilot schools for proving the value to the public school system of the exciting new principles. He explained his position clearly in his 1830 address at the founding of the American Institute of Instruction:

> The children of every parent in New England, may, by the auspicious arrangement of the system of public schools, receive the benefit of instruction, as soon as they are old enough to walk to the schoolhouse. What is here needed, then, in the way of improvement, is not the introduction of a new system, but the better adaptation of that which already exists, to the education of the youngest classes of scholars. All the advantages of the methods of instruction in the infant schools, would be attained by adopting the <u>spirit</u> of these methods, in <u>primary education</u>.[18]

William Russell's problem, from the time he began his

persistant advocacy of infant schools in 1826, was to find a group in Boston with the interest, the expertise, and the financial resources to found the first infant schools and sustain them long enough to prove the efficacy of their principles. His opening editorial in the American Journal of Education illustrates how broadly he was casting his net in order to attract support for the establishment of the schools:

> Of all the attempts which have been made to render the morning of life a season of pure enjoyment the system of infant schools seems to be the most successful. In England these schools have hitherto been applied to the amelioration of the condition of the poor. There is no good reason, however, why they should be restricted to any one class, whilst they are so well calculated for the benefit of all. Nor is there any reason why they should not be adopted as valuable auxiliaries to the best parental managment; and we are happy to observe the system of these schools introduced in the initiatory department of the high-school of New-York.[19]

Russell lost no opportunity to point out that the schools, though founded in England for the poor, would be advantageous to all classes of society. He drew attention to the fact that the principles of infant schools were already being adopted in some American cities with an awareness of the pride which Boston society took in its educational institutions. The suggestion that New York, of all places, was surpassing Boston in its use of advanced educational principles in public schools was undoubtedly designed to stir Boston citizenry to action. Apparently Russell was not especially concerned about who founded the schools or for what purpose as long as an opportunity was provided for ~~testing~~ putting the new principles in ~~action~~ to practice.

In England the new educational principles were ancillary to a program for dealing with urban crime and poverty. English theorists of educational reform had added the new principles to

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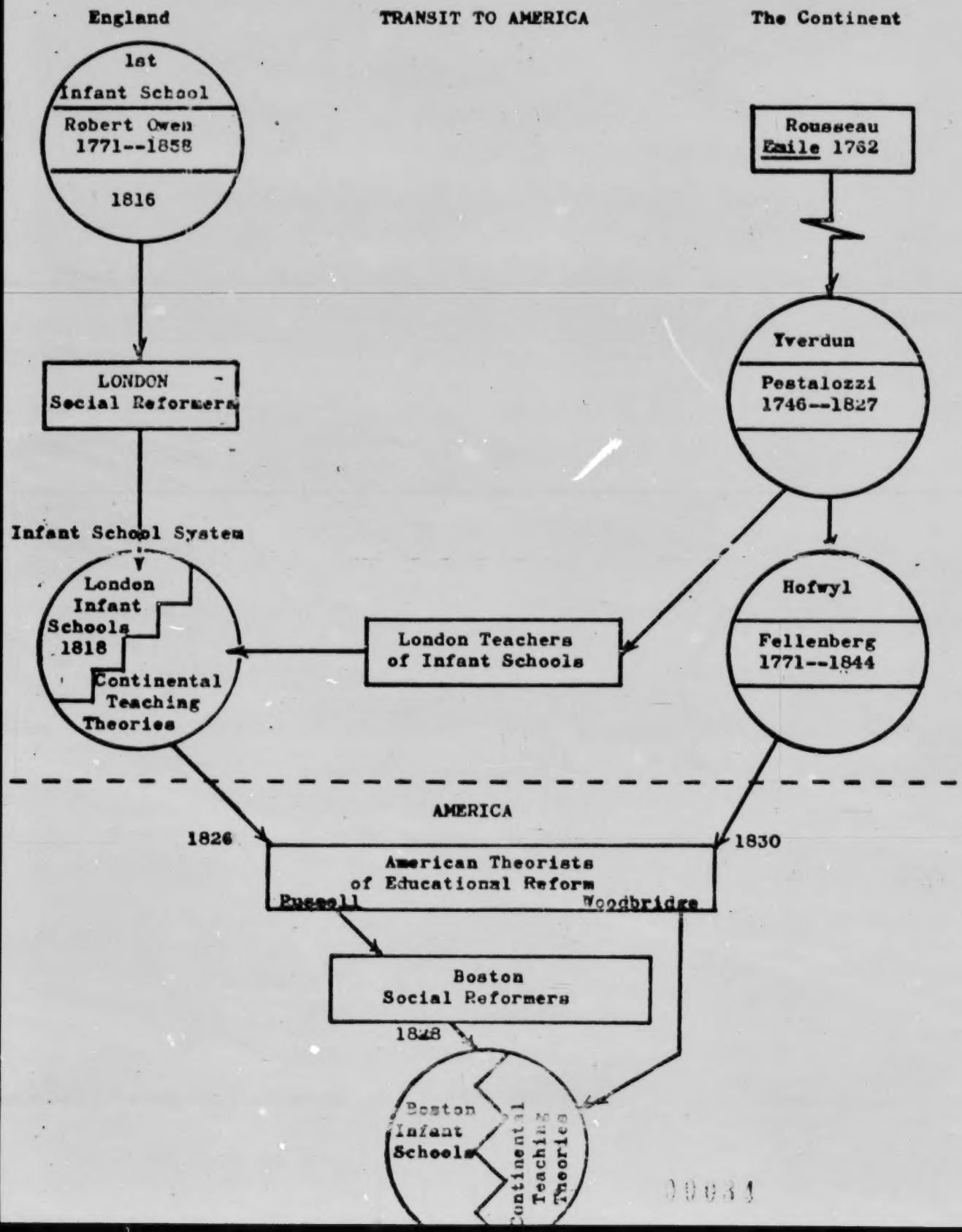
EVOLUTION OF THE INFANT SCHOOL SYSTEM

and the

TRANSIT TO AMERICA



schools which had already been set up by social reformers with clear conceptions of what they hoped the schools to accomplish. In America, however, the opposite was the case. It was William Russell, theorist of educational reform, who noticed the schools, saw the novelty of the techniques they employed, and brought them to the attention of social reformers in Boston.

V. THE FOUNDING OF INFANT SCHOOLS IN BOSTON

Russell's efforts to encourage Bostonians to found an infant school were successful in 1828. By that time such schools had been in operation in Philadelphia and New York for nearly a year and favorable reports on their progress had appeared in Boston newspapers as well as in the American Journal of Education. In that year two separate infant school societies were founded, one opening a school on Salem Street on June 23, 1828 and the other opening a school on Pleasant Street during the same month.[20]

Of the society which founded the Salem Street School almost nothing is known. Abigail May, daughter of Colonel Joseph May, and later Mrs. Bronson Alcott, was apparently active in the early planning of the society. The social prominence of her father and the fact that her brother, Samuel, was one of the first Unitarian ministers in Connecticut would suggest that the society was supported by ladies of socially prominent Unitarian families of Boston. But this assumption would seem to be contradicted by the fact that the Christian Examiner, a major organ of the Unitarian establishment, makes no reference to the Salem Street School or its successors during the entire period of their existence.

Piecing together scraps of information from biographies of Bronson Alcott, the Ladies Magazine, the Annual Reports of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston, and various Boston newspapers, the following picture of the activities of "the other school society," as the ladies of the Infant School Society of

the Infant School Society of the City of Boston termed it, has emerged.

The Society was organized in April 1828, the same month that the Infant School Society of the City of Boston was organized. Bronson Alcott was hired to be the instructor of the first school which opened with seventeen pupils, mostly of immigrant parentage, in Salem Street on June 23rd. A Mrs. Bush was chosen by the society to be Alcott's assistant and she took his place as instructor after he left the school to found his own on Common Street on October 17th. By July 1829 the school had been moved to Atkinson Street and its enrollment had grown to 70 pupils under the guidance of Mrs. Bush.

During the next two years the Society garnered sufficient support to erect its own school building in Theatre Alley, just a short distance from the Atkinson Street location. After the report of the new school building in April 1832, we have found no further information concerning this Society or its activities. As there is only sketchy information available on the Society we have described above, the rest of our analysis of infant education will refer to the much more solidly documented activities of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston. Our analysis also excludes, due to the lack of evidence, the private infant schools in Boston which catered to middle and upper class pupils.

William Russell, in his zeal for insuring that infant school methods would have an opportunity for an adequate demonstration in Boston, is one of the few persons at that time who was successful in transcending the rigid boundaries of sectarian faction which entered into almost every aspect of the city's life in the first four decades of the nineteenth century. In the June 1828 issue of the American Journal of Education he announced, with obvious satisfaction, a meeting of some 90 Boston ladies at the home of Mrs. William Thurston. After a prayer from Reverend Thomas H. Skinner, they proceeded to organize the Infant School Society of the City of Boston. The details of this announcement said a

00036

good deal about the new society. Mr. Thurston, a lawyer of considerable wealth, was a leading figure in the orthodox Trinitarian reaction to the Unitarian establishment. Similarly, Reverend Skinner had been recently called from Philadelphia to serve in one of Boston's newly organized Trinitarian churches. It appears that this group of 90 ladies who formed the new society were a part of that quite remarkable minority in Boston who set out with evangelical fervor in the second decade of the nineteenth century to rescue the city from the moral and spiritual lassitude of Unitarian complacency. Though these ladies were well-to-do middle class citizens, they were not members of the highest levels of Boston society which tended to be Unitarian during this period.[21]

In a certain sense, the response of this group was ideally suited to carry out William Russell's hope for the establishment of an infant school. Though Russell's main ties were with the Unitarians, he could not help but be aware of the zeal with which the husbands of these ladies had pursued a large variety of reform efforts during the decade since they had organized the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor in 1816. The credo of these men had been set forth clearly in the third annual report of that Society where they emphasized the relationship between poverty, vice, and ignorance and proposed that moral and religious instruction were much more effective deterrents to crime than "the mere dread of legal punishment." They concluded that:

> Nine tenths of the pauperism in our country is occasioned by vice; and much the greater part of the public expenses for the support of the poor would be saved, if a great and general effort were made to instruct the ignorant, to encourage industry, and to restrain from the most noxious vices.[22]

By the time this report was published, the Society had already been a major influence in the establishment of the primary schools in Boston, had pursued a program of bringing religious instruction

00017

to the city's seafaring population, and had founded and maintained an ambitious Sabbath school program for the children of the poor. They took special pride in their Sabbath school program:

> To these schools, indeed we must look for the effectual check of destructive habits. Adults are fixed, and with difficulty wrought on. Children are pliable. Their early age is tender, and capable of impressions. Much of the public benefit, therefore, which we are anticipating from the exertions of this society, must be expected from its Sabbath Schools.[23]

The Sabbath schools were conducted under the watchful eye of male superintendants who dutifully tallied for annual reports the achievements of the pupils in each school: "Our pupils during the last year have recited 123,524 verses of Scripture, 2,248 verses of hymns, and 612 answers in the catechism."[24] The Sabbath schools accepted children as young as five, instructing them during most of the day on Sunday. The curriculum was not entirely the learning of scriptures and catechisms as a serious effort was made to instruct the children in rudimentary reading, writing, and ciphering.

The Sunday school teachers regarded their efforts as primarily a supplement to the public school system both in the extension of the curriculum of primary schools to children who might not have an opportunity to attend them and in the broadening of that curriculum to include a stronger element of religious instruction than was available in the public schools. In keeping with this vision, no new teaching theories or techniques were applied in the Sabbath schools. Their popularity is evidenced by the fact that they continued to grow even after primary schools were established in Boston for children down to the age of four years in 1818. By 1828 the number of Sabbath schools maintained by the Society had grown to eighteen. In that year the Sabbath schools were put under the management of the American Sunday School Union.

By 1828 the members of the Society for the Religious and

00038

Moral Instruction of the Poor had a long history of interest and experience in the promotion of education among the urban poor which they conveyed to their wives who established the Infant School Society for the City of Boston. These men enthusiastically encouraged the creation of the infant schools and noted in their own 1829 report the initial successes of these schools:

> To infant schools the recent progress has been easy---and many a family has been thus furnished with one of the best assignable instruments for raising it gradually out of obscurity, inefficiency, and distress.[25]

VI. THE SOCIAL SETTING FOR THE INFANT SCHOOL MOVEMENT IN BOSTON

As in London in 1824, the infant schools in Boston were to be underwritten by social reformers who saw in them a means of combatting the ills of urban society. But there is a very interesting and significant difference in the role played by the educational theorists in the two movements. Whereas in London the social reformers first established the infant schools and then called upon the educational theorists for guidance in teaching young children, the process was exactly the reverse in Boston. There the educational theorists such as Russell were the first to advocate the establishment of infant schools in order to put into practice their new educational ideas and the Boston social reformers responded, though with very different goals in mind, to those pleas. In part this was due to the fact that Boston did not ~~readily~~ experience the same degree of social disorganization as English cities did during this period of increasing urbanization and industrialization. However, this fact did not seem to have dampened the ardor nor significantly altered the arguments which the American reformers applied to the infant school cause.

Much of the discussion about the value of infant schools concentrated on their usefulness in dealing with urban problems.

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This was of particular relevance in a state such as Massachusetts which was much more urbanized than the rest of the nation during the entire antebellum period.[26] Though the Commonwealth, and especially the eastern counties, were relatively quite urban by the 1820's, the great increase in the percentage of people living in large urban areas over 8000 persons did not occur until the late 1830's---after the decline of the infant education movement in the state.

INSERT GRAPH #1

Boston was the largest urban area in Massachusetts throughout this period. Though it had a smaller population than cities such as New York and Philadelphia, it experienced many of the social problems due to urban crowding and rapid population growth.[27] But just as in the state as a whole, the period of the most rapid population growth occurred after the peak of enthusiasm for the infant schools.

INSERT GRAPH #2

Though the effects of population concentration and growth in Massachusetts as a whole and Boston in particular were relatively mild compared to the experiences of English cities in the first half of the nineteenth century, many citizens of Boston were ~~quite upset~~ disturbed both by the present level and the anticipated possible increase in social problems in their community.

It is difficult to otain accurate estimates of levels and trends in poverty and crime for nineteenth century Boston. One very crude approximation of the level of concern about these problems is indicated by the per capita expenditures of the city on these issues.

INSERT GRAPH #3

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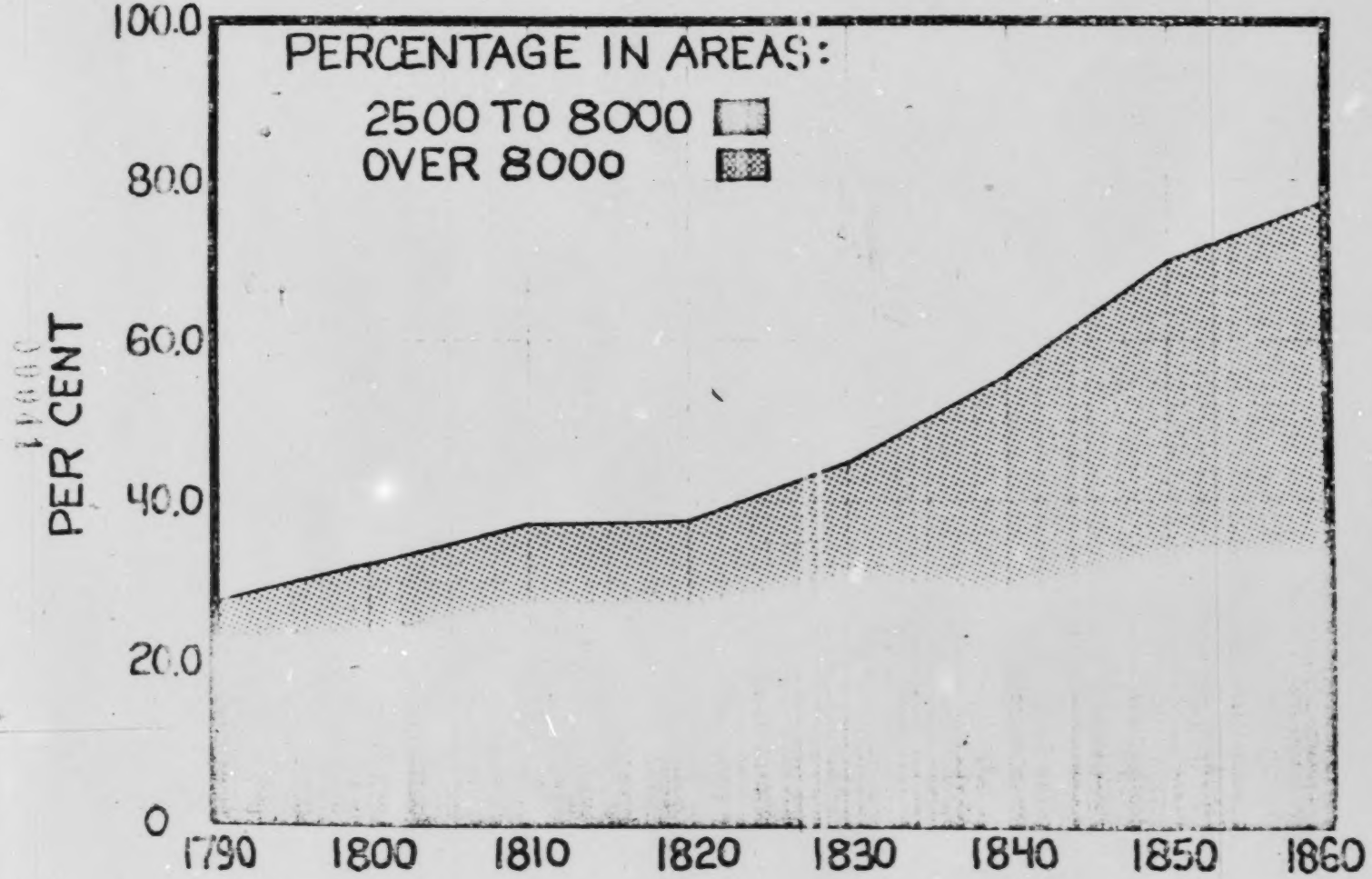
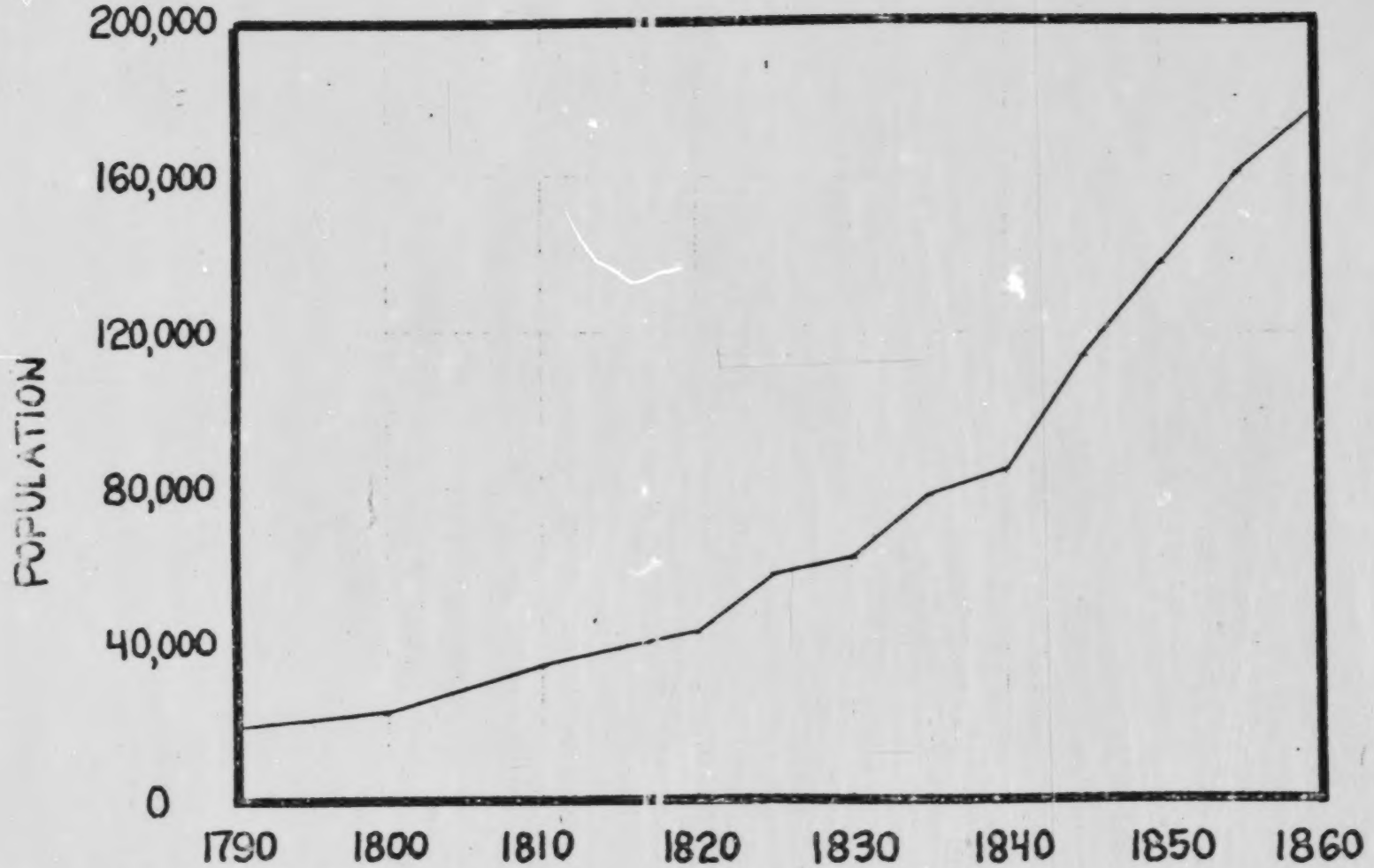
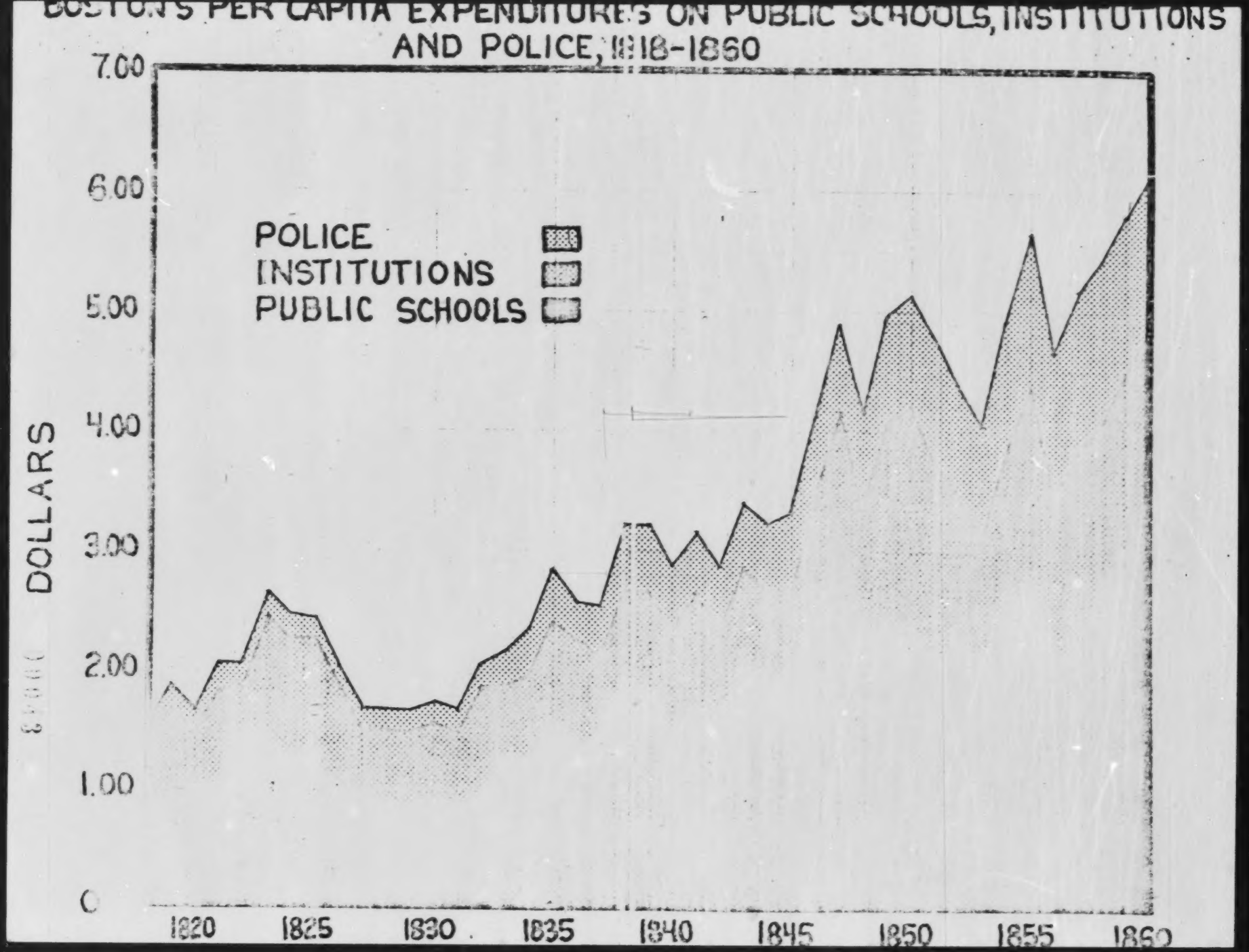
PERCENTAGE OF MASSACHUSETTS POPULATION IN URBAN AREAS 1790-1860



BOSTON'S POPULATION
1790-1860




BOSTON'S PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS, INSTITUTIONS AND POLICE, 1818-1860
7.00
6.00
5.00
4.00
3.00
2.00
1.00
0
DOLLARS
POLICE
INSTITUTIONS
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1820
1825
1830
1835
1840
1845
1850
1855
1860

It is interesting to note that the per capita expenditures for institutions for the poor and the mentally ill as well as for the police were considerably less than the expenses of educating the children in the public schools. Furthermore, these expenditures did not drastically increase during the period when infant schools were being advocated.[28] In part, the low level of per capita expenditures by the Boston city government on the poor is a reflection of the fact that a large part of the burden of providing for the poor was left to the voluntary contributions of private organizations and individuals. But it also reflects the remarkably small burden that these problems imposed on the community compared to English cities.[29]

The interest and focus of social reformers in Boston on the problems of the poor is missed by examining only public expenditures on the poor. The crucial changes during this period were not in the financial costs to society but rather in the attitudes of the reformers. Social reformers began to distinguish among different types of poor and attempted to reform them morally as well as to provide them with a means of livihood. More attention was now given to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty by reaching the young children within these homes and providing them with the social norms and necessary skills to escape from a life of continued dependence on society.[30]

The issue of poverty was the major motivating factor to the founders of the two infant school societies in Boston. They saw in the infant schools a means of permanently eliminating poverty by educating the children from poor families.

Crime rather than poverty was uppermost in the minds of the founders of the Infant School Society in London. It appears that the incidence and severity of crimes in Boston were much lower than in Europe. In fact, Wilderspin argued that the crime rate was three times as high in England as in America---a difference which he attributed to the existence of widespread, inexpensive public school education in America.[31] And as a result, though crime was

often mentioned by the American advocates of infant education, they most often used the ~~more in terms of~~ "vice" rather than "crime" in describing the evils the schools were intended to prevent. There are few indications of concern for immediate public safety in the arguments on behalf of infant schools or references to gangs of young hoodlums terrorizing whole districts of the city as there were in England. The connection of ignorance, poverty, and vice was always made, but the vices are described more frequently in terms of their consequences to the sinner than their effect upon the public.

In 1833 the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor spoke with pride of the results of their collaboration with Mayor Josiah Quincy (an early member of that society) in their efforts to clean up "the hill,"---as the notorious district sloping west from Beacon Hill was known. But the measure of their success was the number of pubs and brothels which had been closed, fourteen or fifteen of the latter having "been converted into reputable dwellings." And the crowning achievement was that:

> One of them, a house that had stood for 17 or 18 years the way to perdition to hundreds of souls--- a house fitted up, and furnished in a style of elegance suited to the taste of men who have money, and are willing to spend it---a house always quiet and orderly, and had therefore eluded the arm of the law---this house, in October last, was voluntarily given up and rented for the use of the Secretary's family, and has since been peacably occupied by the same. We say indeed, that a residence in that part of the city is now as quiet and safe as in any other, and that reputable females, by day or night, are probably as safe from insult there as elsewhere.[32]

A city where the result of a major neighborhood improvement program was that ladies were able to walk in all areas at night with no fear of insult would seem by London standards of the time to have been tame indeed.[33]

It has been noted that in England, since 1816 when Owen had founded his infant school at New Lanark, the infant school

movement was viewed as an ideal means of dealing with the harmful effects of industrialization. It offered the advantage of providing an institution for the moral and literary instruction of the urban poor at the earliest possible age while their mothers are thus freed to work. As Massachusetts was a leader in industrial development in America during the 1820's and 1830's, one might have expected that the social reformers in this state would have reiterated the arguments of their English counterparts. However, the nature of the manufacturing system in Massachusetts minimized the usefulness and the need of relieving working mothers from caring for their children. Most Massachusetts manufacturing firms using female labor tried to hire young, single women rather than married women with young children.[34]

In Boston itself manufacturing was not very important in the economy during the 1820's and 1830's.[35] As a result, even when the advocates of infant education did use the argument that the schools freed the mothers to work, the nature of the employment opportunities for those women were not specified. Furthermore, when Reverend Joseph Tuckerman wrote his lengthy essay on the conditions of working females in 1830, he did not even mention the usefulness of infant education in allowing women to work.[36]

A sizeableable immigrant community existed in Boston by the 1830's, especially Catholic Irish. During the first three decades of the nineteenth century, native Bostonians and the immigrants lived in relative harmony. Beginning in the 1830's though, there was increased hostile feelings and actions against the Catholic immigrants. Lyman Beecher's series of sermons in the Park Street Church argued that the Catholic religion and American democracy were incompatible. Partly as a result of these sermons, an angry mob attacked and burned the Ursaline Covenant in Charlestown in 1834. Though these two events probably overdramatize the public feelings against Catholics, it is nonetheless clear that the Irish were in Boston in sufficient numbers to make the native population concerned about the increasing

immigration into the city.[37] There is throughout the literature of the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor an undercurrent, which, though rarely surfacing, makes it nonetheless clear that the conversion of Catholics was one of the objectives of the Society.

The understandable tendency of Catholic priests to actively discouraged their parishioners from sending their children to the Sabbath schools, posed a problem for the infant school societies, which stressed Protestant religious and moral values in the classroom. A large percentage of those who might have benefited the most from infant education, the Catholic immigrants, were discouraged by the Catholic Church. However, this problem apparently was never acute because the Boston infant school societies had closed their doors before the large waves of Catholic immigrants and the increasing hostility between the Catholics and Protestants in the 1840's occurred.[38]

Our examination of social conditions in Massachusetts and Boston in 1828 has suggested that population growth, the level of poverty, crime rates, industrialization, and immigration were <u>not</u> the causes of the infant education movement, but rather that the importation of instruments of reform caused educational reformers to seek out objects for the use of their new techniques. The social problems in Boston were never so severe at this time to encourage social reformers to see their crusade as an Armageddon. Rather, many of the social reformers argued more on the basis of avoiding the excesses of English urbanization and industrialization than on combatting the same type and degree of problems in Boston.[39] Ironically, just as the infant education movement began its sudden decline, most of the social problems mentioned above were becoming increasingly serious. However, the gradual intensification of social problems was not sufficient to save the already faltering infant education system because the causes of its demise were not based on its relevance or lack of relevance to the social conditions of the day.

VII. THE CHARACTER AND OBJECTIVES OF THE INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON

What, then, were the circumstances which led to the decline of the infant schools, just at the time when the need for them was becoming most acute? The first circumstance arose from the hopes and expectations of the ladies who had accepted a part of William Russell's arguments and determined to support the schools. It has been pointed out that Russell, a theorist of educational reform, wanted to see the schools instituted primarily as instruments for bring about reforms in the teaching theories and techniques used in the public schools. It is no surprise, however, that the ladies who founded the Infant School Society of the City of Boston were less concerned about educational reform than they were about moral reform. They saw the infant schools as an extension in two dimensions of the work of their husbands had been so long engaged in with their Sabbath schools. Believing the infant mind to be especially susceptible to influences of its environment, whether good or bad, and having used this argument to garner support for Sabbath schools, it was a natural step to extend the beneficent influence of such schools to still younger children. And seeing an obvious advantage in insuring a better environment for the longest period of time possible, it was perfectly logical to extend the schools from one to six days a week.

The infant schools were uncommon in that their proponents saw in them the ultimate tool of social reform. They were to break the cycle of ignorance, poverty, and crime by removing the infants from the culture which had those evils as early as possible and for as many hours as possible. Respectable society would have at least an equal chance to transmit to these open and unsullied minds of infants the values of its own culture. Institutions for the reforming of older children and adults might ameliorate social ills. Infant schools seemed to promise

to eradicate them. These ladies were convinced that "...we can in no way so effectualy benefit the human family, both in a temporal and spiritual point of view, as by the establishment of good infant schools.... It must be admitted, that all the other benevolent institutions labor to cure those evils, which this is designed to prevent. If we can succeed in preventing ignorance and vice there will be none to cure."[40]

The officers and managers of the society throughout its known existence continued to be a small, closely-knit group. Nearly twenty percent of the entire number were wives or relatives of men who were officers or patrons of the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor. But the group was composed entirely of ladies and the only official relationship of men to the society was a group of five men chosen each year to serve as a Board of Advisors, an auditor, and two physicians. All management of the schools seems to have been entirely under the guidance of the women. This is in marked contrast to the Sabbath school movement and a careful reading of the infant school movement's discussions seems to reveal a modest degree of militancy in their insistance that this is one educational cause which falls squarely and exclusively within their provenance. Characteristic is the 1830 assertion in the Ladies' Magazine that "...it is well observed that 'females have many natural qualifications for instructors of infants,' which men have not——it is also true that females are competent, and might be advantageously employed in the business of education to a far greater extent than has ever yet been practiced."[41]

The relatively small group of women who were the officers and managers of the Infant School Society are those whom we have singled out and designated the "social reform" group. They were those whose devotion to the cause sustained their activity and commitment whatever vicissitudes were to befall them. Their financial resources were not enough in themselves to be able to support the society, however. In their effort to raise funds they

were able to mobilize the support of a much larger body of Boston women---mostly of the orthodox congregations. These women we have chosen to call the "civic-minded social elites"---women who read their Ladies' Magazine, kept up on current fashions, and were quick to respond to causes which the more solid core of social reformers would bring to their attention. It was these women who formed the larger body of patrons of the Society in its early years and who supported the annual fund-raising fairs conducted by the society during its first three years of operation.

The ladies had difficulties in planning for the establishment of their schools after their first organizational meeting. It is not known what the nature of the difficulties were---possibly the fear that the "other Infant School Society" would channel off so much public support as to make it difficult to finance their own schools. They decided to consult with a council of men on May 7th. Encouraged by the men to continue, they hired an instructress and sent her to New York to learn the proper techniques for teaching an infant school. In June they opened a school on Pleasant Street in the far south-western quarter of the city, but moved it within three months to Bedford Street, an area closer to the heart of the city and more to the east of the Pleasant Street location. There the school grew dramatically, reporting by the spring of 1829 an enrollment of 153 and a daily attendance of nearly 70 pupils.[42]

Insert Chart 1 and map.

VIII. THE EFFORT TO GAIN PUBLIC SUPPORT LEADS TO MISUNDERSTANDING

In February 1829 the Ladies' Magazine was reporting that:

> The interesting subject of Infant Schools is becoming more and more fashionable.... We have been told that it is now in contemplation, to open a school for the infants of others besides the poor. If such course be not soon adopted, at the age for entering primary schools those poor children will assuredly be the richest scholars. And why should a plan which promises so many advantages, independent of merely relieving

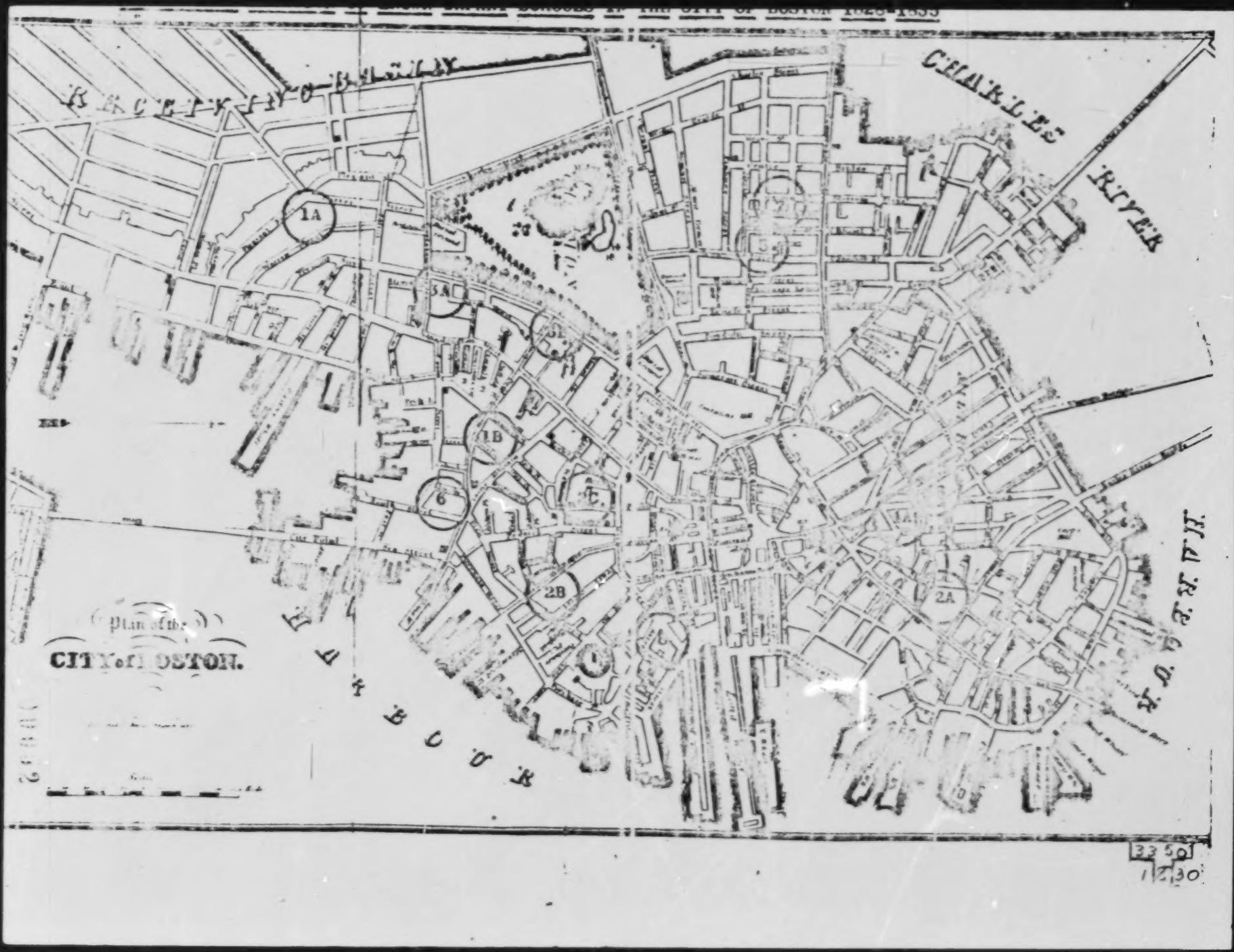
KNOWN INFANT SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF BOSTON 1828-1835*

	Location (See Map)	Founded	Closed	Instructor	Enrollment+	Note
Schools of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston						
1A	Pleasant St.	June 1828	August 1828	Miss Blood	o	Moved to Bedford St.
1B	Bedford St.	August 1828	1833	Miss Blood	129	Closed by competition of 2 neighboring schools.
4A	Stillman St.	1829	1835	"	73.8	Reported moved to Charlestown St.
4B	Charlestown St.	1835	o	"	o	Planned, but no evidence that school was opened.
7	Garden St.	Oct. 1833	o	Miss Mary Jones	65.3	In the Mission House.
Schools of the "Other Infant School Society" of Boston						
2A	Salem St.	June 1828	Before July 1829	B. Alcott Mrs. Brush	50	Alcott left in Sept. 1828 to found own school.
2B	Atkinson St.	By July 1829	Before April 1832	Mrs. Brush		
2C	Theatre Alley	By April 1832	o	"	o	New building built for the school.
8	Broad St.	By Oct. 1835	o	"	o	Assumed to be supported by this Society, though this is uncertain.
Private Schools						
3A	Common St.	Oct. 1828	April 1829	B. Alcott	20	Name of Common St. changed to Tremont St. in 1830, but Alcott's 2nd school in new location, near St. Paul's.
3B	Tremont St.	April 1829	May 1830	B. Alcott	30	
5	Belknap St.--African	Summer 1830	o	"	o	Established by Miss E. O. Lane
6	Near Bedford St.	By 1833	o	"	o	

*Numbers indicate order of founding. Letters indicate new location of same school--ie. same instructor.

+Annual average of all known figures.

o No information available.


CHARLES RIVER
1A
5A
1B
6
2B
2A
Plan of the
CITY of BOSTON.

the mother from her charge, be confined to children of the indigent?

The editor of the magazine then added a long list of arguments for the founding of infant schools for the well-to-do, including the evocation of the charming image of the father, after coming home from a hard day at "counting-room or shop," being pleased to hear his son "...with his yet scarcely formed accents... singing our national air,...to the words, 'Five times five are twenty-five, and five times six are thirty, And five times seven are thirty-five, and five times eight are forty.' "[43]

This enthusiasm mounted when the infant schools began to give public demonstrations early in 1829. The Boston Recorder and Scriptual Transcript reported such an exhibition held at the Essex Street Church on Thursday, June 11, 1829 before a "house ...filled with gentlemen of the legislature and citizens." The Recorder described the scene in detail:

> The very first appearance of the school was affecting. Accompanied by their teacher and assistants, they marched into the house to their own music, repeating the numbers, 'one, two, three, four, & c.' As soon as they were all in place on a temporary platform in front of the pulpit they rose together and sang their morning hymn.... For nearly an hour and a half the audience were highly entertained and delighted by witnessing their improvements. Seldom, we apprehend, has any project or enterprise been so conclusively presented to this community, as was the Infant School System of instruction by this public exhibition. There was an urgent call for a repetition of it.... We trust an impulse has already been given which will produce the establishment of many more schools in this city; and that a feeling has already been carried to more than a hundred villages, which will there produce the same happy results.[44]

The founding of infant schools for the children of the well-

to-do had already begun and the extension to the outlying villages was under way. More public demonstrations were to follow in short order. Infant schools had clearly become a favorite charity of the Boston orthodox community.

Such public demonstrations were to contribute to exaggerated public expectations and misunderstandings of the nature of the schools. It is ironic that in view of both the social reform ladies of Boston and of William Russell, ~~that~~ these demonstrations were a necessary part of the promotion of the schools. Russell hoped that the principles of the infant schools would prove so effective in teaching even the youngest and most deprived children that the conservative public school officials could not help admitting their worth and adopting them into the primary school system. However, the most successful aspects of these public demonstrations emphasized exactly those facets of infant education which Russell had been attempting to eradicate.

The ladies of the Infant School Society had similar reasons for making sure that the schools received a favorable and widespread public notice. The model for their reform efforts would naturally have been the previous activities of the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor. And in both the Seamens' churches and the Sabbath Schools the pattern had been to support a new reform effort in its early stages, prove its viability, and then turn the organization over to more permanent bodies with a base of patrons sufficiently large to insure their perpetuation. There can be little doubt that such was also the hope with the infant school program, and that either the churches of Boston or the public school system were the likely groups to sustain the schools once their viability had been proven.

But such public demonstrations worked at cross-purposes to the objectives which had led the ladies to support the schools. They were primarily interested in the potential of the institutions as instruments of moral reform in the community. And yet, how does one demonstrate the progress made in reforming the morals of

infants? The very name chosen for the institutions, "infant schools;" the fact that those who taught were called "instructresses;" and the whole experience of the public with the concept "school" determined the credentials which could be the only diploma of success. A public trained over decades to think of schools as institutions where children were taught order and discipline so that they might master the fundamental skills of reading, writing, and ciphering found itself captivated by the idea that two or three year olds were capable of learning what it had been previously thought only older children could learn.

The public assumption that infant schools were the same as primary schools, except that they taught younger children, was subversive to the intentions of William Russell as well as to those of the ladies of the Infant School Society. A report by the editors of the Ladies' Magazine of visits to the Atkinson Street School and the Bedford Street School in June of 1829 reveals the problem clearly. The Atkinson Street School was under the sponsorship of the "other Infant School Society" and was almost certainly Russell's favorite in terms of its adherence to the Pestalozian principles which he deemed to be the heart of the enterprise. But the ladies who visited the school reported that:

> The little ones seemed happy, indeed almost too merry ---more like a large nursery than a school; but as they are, in consequence of removing the school, mostly new pupils, they have not yet become accustomed to the necessary regulations. Order is an excellent thing and it may, and should be introduced.

The good ladies found the Bedford Street School far more to their liking: "The progress of these children in knowledge, (that is a better term than learning) is astonishing to those who have never watched the unfolding of the infant mind, and delightful to every one. The order exhibited there is admirable;...," the children marching in happily from their recess singing, "We'll go to our places And make no wry faces, But say all our lessons distinctly and slow."[45]

William Russell's 1829 "Address on Infant Schools" had begun by asserting that "An infant school may be best described, perhaps, as something which resembles, not so much a school, as a large nursery, and the object of which is to provide for its little inmates employment and amusement, not less than instruction."[46] But as the reaction of the Boston ladies illustrates, Russell was unsuccessful in convincing the public that infant schools embodied new principles, the efficacy of which could not be judged by the old standards and assumptions. The institutions had been tagged by their founders with the name, "schools." The public demonstrations necessitated the display of their accomplishments as "schools." Once the image had been firmly set there was no other basis upon which the schools could demonstrate their worthiness of public support and emulation.

IX. THE APPEAL TO THE PRIMARY SCHOOL COMMITTEE--- A CONFLICT OF FUNDAMENTAL ASSUMPTIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE INFANT MIND

In his 1829 address Russell stressed a theme that was of major concern to him:

> An Important object in immediate connexion with the present subject, is the good effected by infant schools, through their influence on elementary instruction generally and the useful hints which they offer for the management of primary schools, and even of arrangements of the nursery,[47]

Given the negative attitude of the Boston School Committee, and especially the Primary School Board, with regard to innovations in the schools, there was little chance of the infant schools or their principles being adopted into the public schools in any major way. The persistent hints by Russell and others that the infant schools offered great benefits to the public school

system were specifically taken up by the Primary School Board in 1830. After gathering information from teachers of primary schools who had accepted children from infant schools, they cited the observations of John P. Bigelow as typical of the reports they had received:

> With regard to children from 'Infant Schools,' it is the decided opinion of every instructress in the district, who has had any experience on the subject, that it is better to receive children into the Primary Schools who have had no instruction whatever, than those who have graduated with the highest honors of the Infant Seminaries. It is stated that these children are peculiarly restless in their habits, and are thereby the cause of restlessness and disorder among the other children; and it does not appear that their previous instruction renders them, in any respect, peculiarly proficient or forward in the studies of the Primary Schools.

Other teachers reported the infant school children as "intractable and troublesome, restless from want of constant excitement, and their attention fixed with difficulty upon their studies."[47] The Primary School Board, in condemning occasional introductions of "Exercises in geometry, geography, and natural philosophy," into some primary schools had already made it clear that it saw its mandate to be that of training the children in "correct reading and thorough spelling," only.[48]

It is no wonder that the Boston Primary School Board objected to the deportment of pupils from the infant schools. For the issue was fundamentally between two different conceptions of the infant mind and its capabilities and nature. Derived from these differing conceptions were opposite theories on the purposes and techniques of teaching children. It was in essence an early challenge to the Enlightenment establishment by Romantic [illegible]. In the Boston of the 1830's there could be little doubt as to the immediate victor.[49]

The Primary School Board was closer to the public than were

the educational theorists who had made themselves apostles of Pestalozzian principles. The Primary School Board had no fundamental objection to teaching children of tender years. The fact that the primary schools accepted children as young as four years by law was evidence of that fact. But they could not imagine that the infant mind, blank and open as it was, should be approached in any other manner than through the strict discipline and the rote memorization which had always been a part of their experience. Nor could they imagine that education could serve any other purpose than to prepare children to read and write---to make them more efficient recipients of the knowledge which society had to offer them. This, to them, was the meaning of schools and schooling.

The theorists of educational reform were convinced, as William Russell expressed it, that when properly instructed, "...the pupils, instead of being made passive recipients of injunctions and silent listeners to truth, are allowed a free and varied intercourse with each other and with their teacher, and are made active and spontaneous agents in their own improvement."[50] The most famous summary of these principles was made by Bronson Alcott in 1830:

> He who has low and imperfect views of the infant mind, cannot fail to pervert and degrade its nature; and of all others will be slow, in forming the conclusion, that 'infant education when adapted to the human being, is founded on the great principle, that every infant is already in possession of the faculties and apparatus requisite for his instruction, and that, by a law of his constitution, he does these to a great extent himself; that the office of instruction is merely to facilitate this process, and to accompany the child in his progress, rather than to drive or even to lead him.'[51]

William Russell and Bronson Alcott at times expressed disappointment in the ability of the instructors of infant schools for the poor to put these principles fully into practice. But apparently

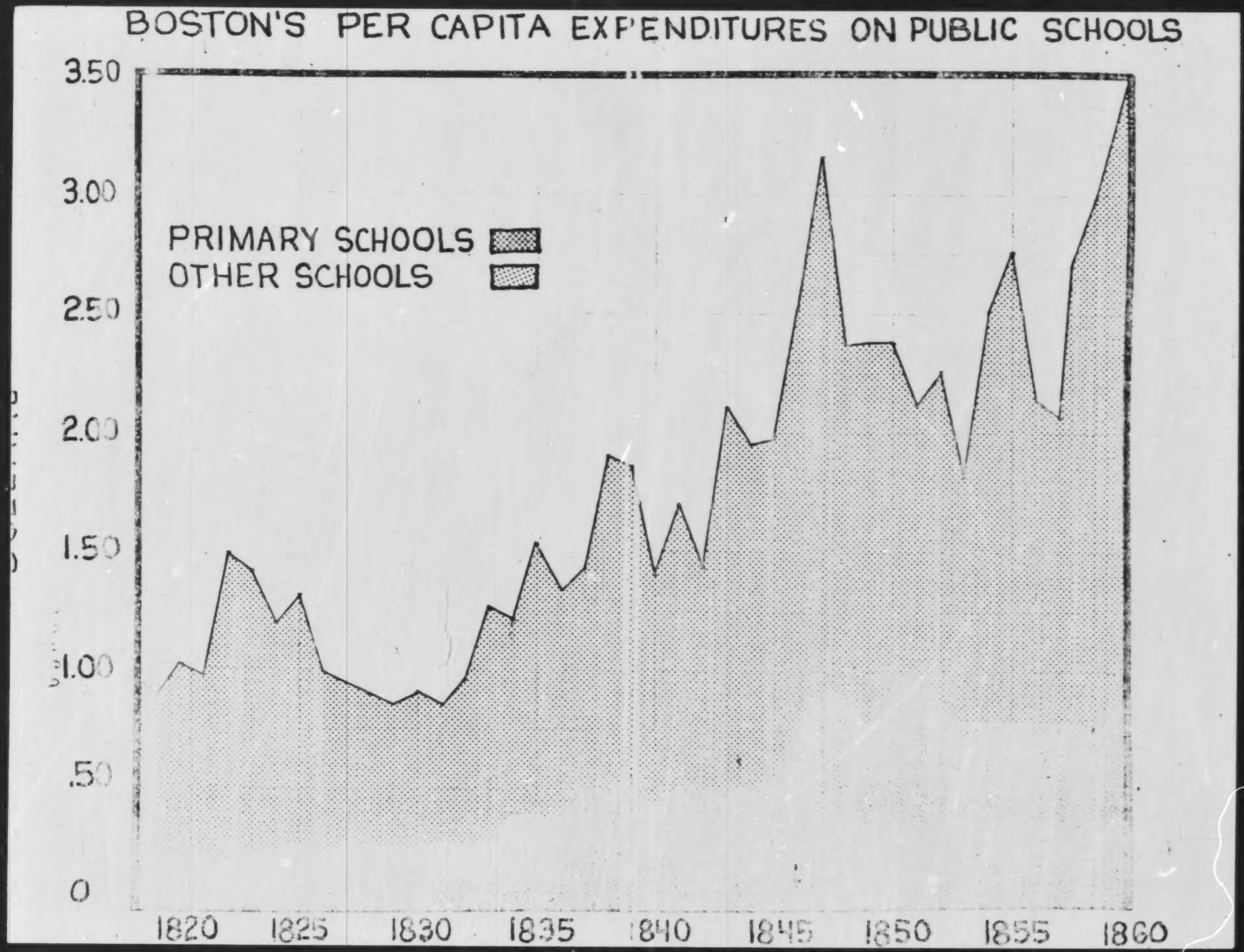
the new principles were employed sufficiently to convince public school officials that the infant schools were violating the accepted canons of proper methods and content of public instruction.

Added to the conflict of opposing ideas of proper teaching principles was the simple problem of expense. As we have already seen in Graph Number 3, the period of retrenchment in public expenditures of all kinds which followed Mayor Quincy's expensive reforms continued until about 1831.[52] And when the expenditures began to rise again, the proportion spent on schools did not grow as rapidly as other city services. Graph #4 clarifies this picture even further:

INSERT GRAPH #4

The Boston public school officials simply were unwilling to expend much money on primary school education. While there are dramatic increases in the amounts spent on the higher level schools beginning in 1831, the expenditures on primary schools show only a moderate increase. As the cost of educating a child in the infant schools was quite high, it was unlikely that the political leadership in Boston during these would be willing to incur that additional expense. If the young child remained an object of public discussion and concern, it was within the framework of home and family---certainly not as a participant in the system of public education. Given the relatively low priority given to educational expenses at the primary level, the idea of adopting infant schools almost certainly would not have been seriously considered by the Primary School Board, even if they had approved of the institutions in principle.

X. THE DECLINE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY--- THE HOME AGAINST THE SCHOOLS


BOSTON'S PER CAPITA EXPENDITURES ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
3.50
3.00
2.50
2.00
1.50
1.00
.50
0
PRIMARY SCHOOLS
OTHER SCHOOLS
1820
1825
1830
1835
1840
1845
1850
1855
1860

There were also major obstacles which prevented the infant schools from continuing as private philanthropies. It has been noted that Pestalozzian principles made their dramatic entry into this country as part and parcel of the infant school idea. But by the late 1820's Pestalozzi's ideas were flowing to America through other channels as well---channels which gave American educators an opportunity to see them in a context other than that of infant schools. In 1827, for example, his series of letters to an English disciple, J.P. Greaves, were published in England as Pestalozzi on Infant Education. They were brought to the attention of Boston readers in 1830 in an enthusiastic review in the Ladies' Magazine.[53] Throughout these letters Pestalozzi emphasized the point that his principles were intended for use of mothers in the home:

> Happy should I be, if I might one day speak through your voice to the mothers of Great Britain. How does my glowing heart expand at the opening prospect which has this moment filled my imagination!
>
> Our great object is the development of the infant mind,---and our great means, the agency of mothers.[54]

The early literature of the infant school movement also reveals a belief that, under normal circumstances, the home was the most desirable place to begin infant instruction. Both the theorists and the sponsors of the infant schools belied their uneasiness in perpetuating the unnatural act of taking poor children from their own homes when they defended the infant schools as homes themselves---homes likely to promote the happiness of both children and society in ways that their natural homes would never do. An English infant school teacher, William Wilson, stressed this point in his Manual of Instruction for Infants' Schools, printed, with revisions, in an American edition in 1830:

> It is the aim of these establishments, to assimilate

00061

> eduvation as much as possible to that of one large family; to awaken and encourage all the kindly feelings of brotherhood among the children themselves, and to teach them subjection and obedience to their instructors, not as to a school-master and mistress, but as to those who, for the time, hold the place of affectionate parents.[55]

The ladies of the Infant School Society themselves held up the hope that the principles taught would be "such as is practiced in well-regulated private families."[56]

The enthusiasm shared by those in the movement for the reform potential of the schools, however, overcame whatever qualms may have existed about taking children from their parents:

> ...Such is the power of bad example---especially that of parents---that it will probably do much to counteract the good influence of the infant school. Indeed there would be every thing to fear, were not its good influences brought to bear on the mind so early. Making every allowance for this evil, will not these children, trained up under the same system, will be better than they; and perhaps, in the third generation, the work of moral renovation will be complete. Then ignorance and vice will be gone and poverty must go too. What an interesting spectacle would a city present, where the meanest dwellings were the abodes of comfort, intelligence and virtue![57]

The later stream of Pestalozzian teachings concerning infant education---a stream which came to America free of the association with infant schools---reinforced a growing attitude among Boston's elites that the infant is better off at home whenever possible. An interesting expression of the direction of this evolution was made ~~in 1829~~ by the editors of the Ladies' Magazine, who in their early enthusiasm had suggested as a part of their 1829 argument favoring infant schools for children of all classes that "It is nearly, if not quite impossible to teach such little ones at home, with the facility they are taught

at an infant school. And if a convenient room is prepared, and faithful and discreet agents employed, parents may feel secure that their darlings are not only safe but improving."[58] Still enthusiastic about the schools a year later, in May of 1830, they nonetheless had changed their emphasis to the importance of the schools in their effects upon the common schools and especially upon the home: "In the nursery---that retired and scarce heeded place of instruction, but which nevertheless shapes more minds than all the public schools on earth---these experiments on the infant mind will operate with a power that must cause a great and rapid change."[59] By 1832, though still urging support for the schools, the editors displayed a revealing lapse of memory when they maintained, "We have never urged their adoption, by those who have the means to provide for their infants, and the time to take care of them. These poor mothers have neither."[60] Such a change in views suggests to us that the civic-minded social elites of Boston were embibing through their Ladies' Magazine and the Annals of American Education the aspect of Pestalozzi's teaching which the advocates of infant schools had obscured---that the home was the proper institutional setting for the education of infants and that the informed mother was the best instructress. Pestalozzian principles, as embodied in the infant school system, had captured the public imagination by offering the promise that children could be taught at a very early age. This novel conception of making use of "what has hitherto been considered the waste years of human life" gave infant schools their early impetus.[61] But shortly the fuller exposition of Pestalozzi's thought began to work against the institutions, as his stress upon the home and family as the ideal "infant school" permeated the attitudes of Boston's elites.

XI. THE DECLINE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY--- PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AGAINST MENTAL PRECOCITY

Still another strand of current European educational theory tended to diminish enthusiasm for the infant schools as it came to be better understood in Boston by the early 1830's. This was the concept of the necessity for a balance in a child's early education--besides intellectual training the development of the body and of the spiritual faculties. The Boston infant schools, at least throughout most of their history, appear to have been shining exemplars of this "balance" principle. Every effort was made to provide a play ground and recess period for the children and there was much emphasis upon marching and clapping exercises and moral lessons. That such ideals were practiced in the schools is implied by the previously-cited complaint of the Boston Primary School Board that the children from infant schools were restless and showed little self-discipline. However, it is also clear that in the short run, physical and moral development is much more difficult to demonstrate than intellectual (or academic) achievement; and the leaders of the movement felt impelled to show quick, dramatic results in order to garner the public financial support needed to continue the schools. Thus, the infant school became associated in the public mind with the type of demonstration of intellectual precocity so glowingly referred to in the Recorder and Transcript article (page 1). While these displays of the infant school children's intellectual advancement were very helpful in gaining initial financial support for the infant schools, they created an image of those schools that made them very vulnerable to the charge that they were promoting premature intellectual precocity at the expense of more balanced development.

In 1829 William Russell gave up his editorship of the American Journal of Education in order to assist Bronson Alcott in founding his own infant school for a wealthy patron in Pennsylvania. His successor, William C. Woodbridge, had just returned from a long stay at Hofwyl, the estate of Philipp von Fellenberg, a disciple of Pestalozzi's. Fellenberg maintained that

the mind could not properly be instructed unless adequate attention was given to the development of the body. Physical exercise occupied nearly half of the daily routine of pupils in his schools,[62] and the "manual training schools" which began to be popular about this time were undoubtedly a product of his theories. William Woodbridge began immediately to stress in his journal the importance of physical development and of timing intellectual training with the proper stage of physical growth. A long editorial which appeared in May of 1830 had already begun to show how the changing attitude towards infancy, while continuing to encourage early education, was hedging the idea with qualifications which were certain to diminish the shallowly rooted public enthusiasm for infant schools:

> It is often said...that the mind in infancy is a mere 'tabula rasa,' a blank sheet, upon which we can write what we will, and in regard to which we have nothing to do but write; happily, nothing can be more untrue than this. The saying is based upon the supposition, that the child is inert, a mere plastic mass, to be moulded at pleasure, and made to assume such forms as we would have him stiffen into with age. It forgets...that all the man is in the child; that all the energies of humanity are there, not in a state of quiescence, but in full and unremitted action.... All we can do, or need do, is to give them alignment and direction.... We have no objection to letters upon blocks of wood, or animals upon cards, or historical prints, or play-maps; ... if they are never forced upon the child; if he is permitted to use them at pleasure and as pleasure, or is, at most, encouraged to play with them. It should never be forgotten that every faculty of the infant, bodily and mental, is striving to come forth into action, and pressing forward urgently its own development.[63]

The doctrine that it is wrong and harmful to try to make the child "assume such forms as we would have him stiffen into with age," is wholly alien to the expectations of the ladies of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston. They wanted nothing more than to impose such forms upon the child and they had a clear

conception of what those forms were to be. The article is a striking example of the continental tradition which saw education to be a process of freeing the child, asserting itself against the English tradition which saw education as a process of acculturating the child into a set of values, the correctness of which, the society had never doubted.

Woodbridge pushed the point still further in his August 1830 number when he compared the training of children with that of plants, animals, or athletes. He said that training should begin early, but with great attention to the changing capacities of the child at each stage:

> It is too little considered,...when the infant begins to be a proper subject of training, and at what age he may become in one respect or another, insensible to its influence....
>
> All the efforts of misjudging teachers and parents who wish to see their children early prodigies, only sacrifice the fruit in order to produce an earlier expansion of the flower, and resemble the hot-bed in their influence in 'forcing' a plant to maturity, whose feebleness or early decay must be proportional to the unnatural rapidity of its growth, and a consequent want of symmetry in its parts.[64]

Such expressions became increasingly common in the American Annals of Education after Woodbridge assumed editorship in 1830. The dire hints of "feebleness" and "early decay" can hardly have escaped the notice of the civic-minded social elites whose donations were the major source of support for the infant schools. The increasing emphasis upon a balance between physical and intellectual cultivation, itself a part of Pestalozzi's principles of education, was eroding public support for the idea of infant schools which the public had once found so much to its liking. The infant schools had de-emphasized their own best principles to gain the financial support of potential patrons. Now the patrons were catching up to those principles, but the public image of the

schools could not be changed so quickly.

XII. THE COLLAPSE OF SUPPORT FOR THE INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY--- THE SCHOOLS AS A CAUSE OF INSANITY

The final blow may well have been the Boston publication in 1833 of Amariah Brigham's Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health. The preface to the first edition, which had appeared the year before in Hartford, made the author's intentions clear:

> The object of this work is to awaken public attention to the importance of making some modification in the method of educating children, which now prevails in this country. It is intended to show the necessity of giving more attention to the health and growth of the body, and less to the cultivation of the mind, especially in early life, than is now given.[65]

The influence of Brigham's book was nothing short of sensational. There is every indication that his intentions, as expressed in the preface were quickly and dramatically realized. Favorable reviews were published in the American Annals of Education, the Christian Examiner and General Reviewer, and in the Ladies' Magazine. Especially significant is the fact that the Ladies' Magazine, which had made the schools objects of special attention almost since their founding made no mention whatsoever of them in its 1834 editions. But their February number did include excerpts from Brigham on the causes of insanity, which listed "the predominance given to the nervous system, by too early cultivating the mind and exciting the feelings of children," as the second most important cause.[66] That same year, our own tabulation of articles opposing infant schools in Boston journals went from a previous high set in 1828, when there were two such articles, to seven. And all of those seven related early instruction to the danger of either

mental or physical debilitation in children.

It is important to note that Brigham's book did not cause the parents of the infant poor to withdraw their children from the schools. The enrollment in those schools for which we have records (as recorded in the Seventh Annual Report of the Infant School Society (1835)) are higher than in any year since 1831. Attendance figures are closer to enrollment figures in both the Stillman Street School and the Garden Street School than they had ever been---both the attendance and enrollment being between 60 and 65 pupils for each school. Even more impressive is the fact that the token weekly payment which the ladies of the Society asked of the pupils' families had risen from its lowest figure of $.75 per pupil per year to $1.35 per pupil per year in 1835. (See Graph No 5) Apparently the parents of the children who attended the Societies' infant schools were sufficiently convinced of the value of the schools that they were sending their children in greater numbers and willing to pay more for the privilege in spite of the dire warnings of Amariah Brigham.

The ladies of the Society seem not to have lost faith in their reform movement. They did all within their power to correct the "hothouse" image which they had been trapped into cultivating. They explained their position in the last annual report we have been able to find:

> In commending Infant Schools to the attention of the Christian community, we wish their nature and design to be distinctly understood, and kept in mind. They are not schools in the common acceptation of the word. The use of this appelation has probably done much to excite a prejudice against them. They may with more propriety be termed neighborhood nurseries, or infant asylums.[67]

The ladies went on to urge financial backing not only for the existing schools, but also for sufficient funds to found several more to meet the needs of a growing number of children in various parts of the city. And to insure success in their expansion plans

they announced that the Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor had agreed to take over management of the schools. The annual reports of this latter Society do not record activities with regard to infant schools, except that J. Leslie Dunstan has reported in his history of that Society that in December 1837 the Society voted to turn all of its interests in infant schools back over to the Infant School Society.[66] Apparently they had been no more successful in stemming the tide of opinion against the schools than had the ladies.

If Amariah Brigham's book did not deter the parents of the infant poor from sending their children to the schools, nor the social reformers who made up the Infant School Society of the City of Boston from continuing their support, how does one account for the collapse of the Society? We would suggest that the key group involved in both the rise and the decline of the movement was that large body of civic-minded women who were initially willing but later reluctant to support the society at the behest of the smaller group of social reformers who had urged its support upon them. Their donation and contributions at annual fund-raising fairs helped keep the society solvent during the years when infant schools were a fashionable cause. Priding themselves on keeping in touch with the latest intellectual currents, literate and well-informed, they were a most sensitive barometer of the rise and fall of intellectual fashions. The ladies of the smaller reform group were more constant because they had invested much more time and thought in sustaining the movement. Moreover, they were convinced that as instruments of reform the infant schools were as badly needed as ever. The parents of the infant poor probably were not aware of Amariah Brigham or the implications of his writings until they found one day that the infant schools had closed their doors for want of funds.

The surviving annual budgets of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston, as portrayed on Graph #5, would seem to substantiate this analysis:

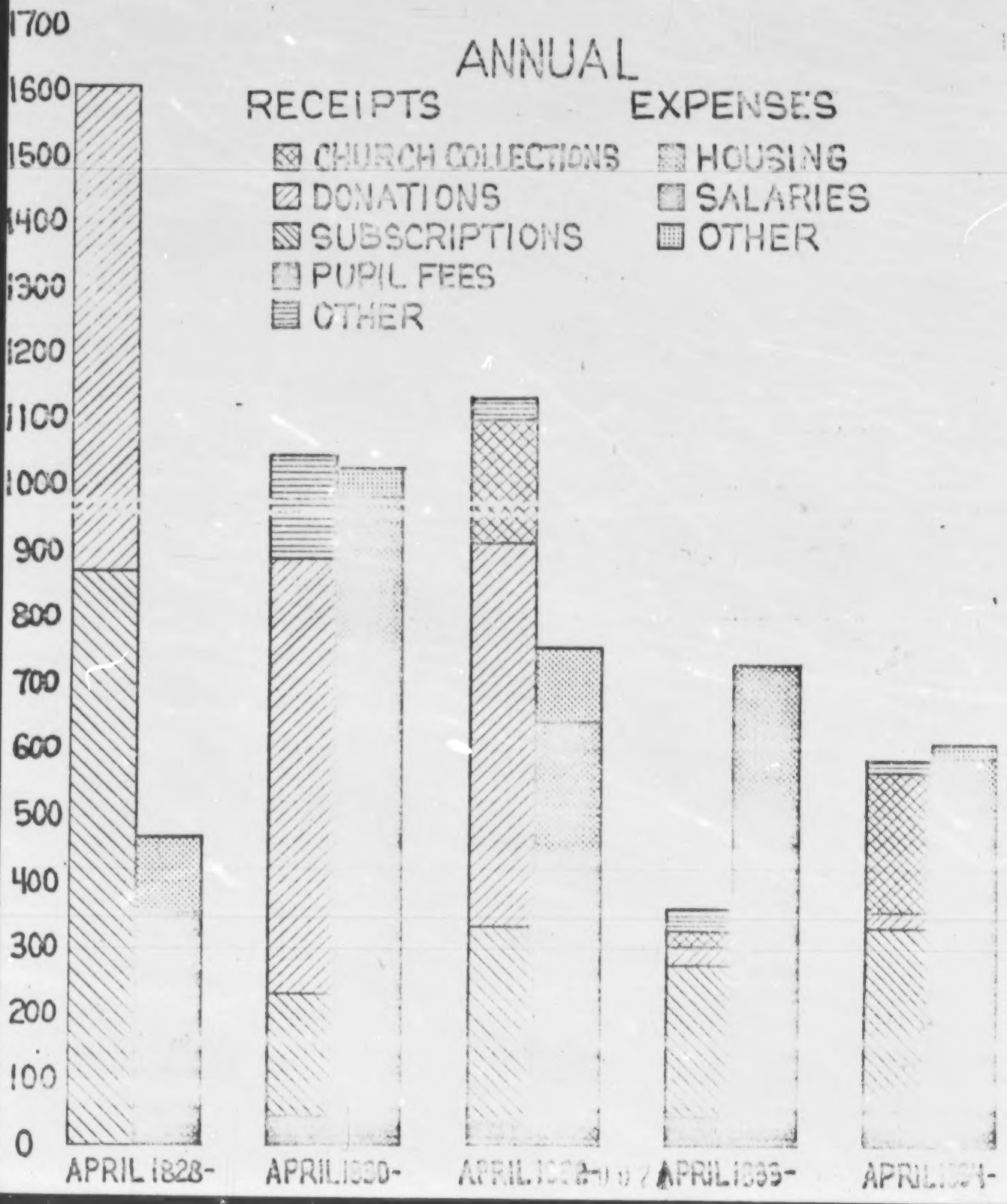
INSERT GRAPH #5

The budget of fiscal 1828 is misleading because of difficulty in interpreting bookkeeping procedures. It probably does not account for all of the expenses of setting up the first schools. The four remaining budgets are divided into two bars, that on the left representing the receipts in any one fiscal year (exclusive of balances brought forward) and that in the right representing the expenses for that year. Receipts are further divided into subscriptions, which we regard as the firmest expression of support for the infant school movement; donations, which we would regard as a less firm commitment of support in that they do not involve being enrolled in the Society; church collections, which we regard as the least firm expression of support for the Society in that they are solicited by the pastors of the churches and represented a more direct loyalty to the pastor and the cause of religious charity than to the infant schools themselves. The pupil's fees are self-explanatory and the "other" category consists primarily of interest earned on the Societies' bank accounts.

The most striking aspect of the graph is the fact that the Society's annual records show a decline from a positive balance of $380.00 in 1832, the year before Amariah Brigham's book was published in Boston, to a negative balance of $372.00, the year that the book was published. It will also be noticed that the greatest volume of that decline by far was in donations---exactly the category where we expect to find the large group of civic-minded social elites. A solid core of subscribers remained and even grew in the subsequent year. The church collections which brought the budget nearly into balance in fiscal 1834 were the result of a special campaign promoted by the pastors of the Park Street, Essex Street, Bowdoin Street, and Federal Street Baptist, churches. Our judgment would be that they represent an expression of

GRAPH NO. 5

ANNUAL BUDGETS FOR THE INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETY OF THE CITY OF BOSTON, 1828-1835



loyalty to the pastors and the churches rather than to the cause of infant education.

It is also interesting to note that the deficits occurred in spite of a continuing decrease in operating expenses gained through cutting back the costs of both housing and teachers' salaries from the peak of fiscal 1830. Note also the contribution of the pupils rising from 1832 in volume and even more dramatically in proportion to the total income of the society. There can be no doubt that the Society continued to enjoy the solid support of those for whose benefit it was intended.

What, then, was the ultimate cause of the demise of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston? The trend in social conditions would seem to argue that the need for the schools as envisioned by the ladies of the Society was never greater than in the late 1830's. One can only conclude that in this instance the underlying social conditions were not as important to those in Boston who might have sustained the Society as were the tides of intellectual fashion. Convinced by ideas expounded in Amariah Brigham's book and in a number of current intellectual journals, the ladies recoiled from the thought that their benevolence, far from insuring the eradiction of poverty and vice, might be contributing to the insanity of future generations. There is a heavy irony in the fact that their reaction was against a misleading image of infant schools which their advocates had felt forced to assume in order to gain these ladies' support.

XIII. THE CASE FOR A POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF INFANT SCHOOLS UPON PUBLIC PRACTICE IN SENDING CHILDREN TO SCHOOL

The demise of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston symbolized the ending of efforts to create educational institutions designed specifically for infants in the Boston area until Elizabeth Palmer Peabody began the kindergarten movement in the 1860's. One infant school founded in Charlestown in

in 1833 did survive into the 1870's though in a form significantly altered from that of the early infant schools. By 1870 its primary activities were the care of orphaned children though it apparently continued, with little success in attracting a clientele, to serve as a day-care center. It is significant that by 1870 its director was not called an instructress, but a matron. This school had apparently survived by successfully achieving the transition in character from school to home, a transition which was made official in 1870 when the name was changed to the Infant School and Children's Home Association. It had become by 1870 a very modest enterprise with fewer than ten children in residence.[69] It is possible that private infant schools or infant schools in other Massachusetts towns survived the decade of the 1830's though we have as yet been unable to find evidence of such survival.

It will be remembered, however, that an early hope of William Russell, among others, was that the principles and spirit of the infant schools would be taken into the public schools and that if this were achieved the survival of infant schools as separate institutions was not important. There is some evidence that in the 1830's and 1840's the Boston Primary School Board did adopt some of the progressive techniques that had been earlier advocated by educational theorists such as William Russell. But it would be impossible to say with confidence that such proposals came from the infant school movement, since, as we have indicated, not all of the innovations in educational techniques for children of the period came directly from the infant schools themselves.

The most distinctive feature of the infant school system was its advocacy of the practice of sending children to school at much earlier ages than had hitherto been the practice. In studying the practices of parents in the ages at which they send their children to school, there is hope of finding evidence for the possible influence of the infant school movement upon the general public. In Boston such an influence is impossible to

detect because it was one of the few town in the Commonwealth that specifically excluded children under four from attending the public schools. But in some of the outlying towns where infant schools are known to have existed, the public school systems did not attempt to set a lower age of admissions to the public schools. In those areas we can get a glimpse of public behavior on the issue of educating young children.

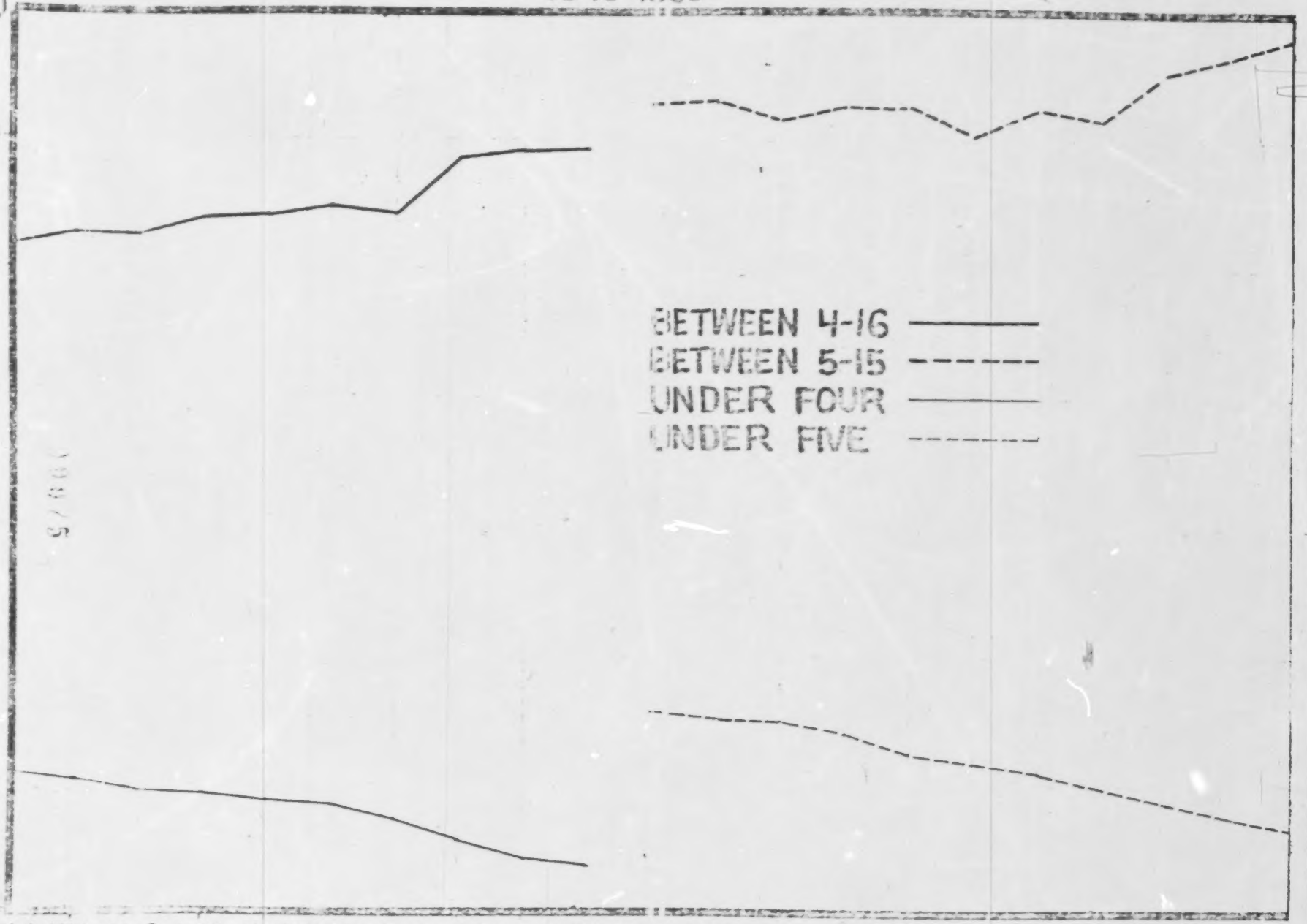
In this connection, it might be appropriate to describe how we were initially brought to this study of the infant school movement in Boston. Our attention was called to the movement by a current discussion of the influence of Horace Mann upon public education in nineteenth century Massachusetts. Data collected and analyzed independently by Albert Fishlow and Maris Vinovskis suggested that the enrollment rate in the public and private was stable or even declining in Massachusetts during the period of Mann's tenure as the Secretary of the Board of Education. This appeared to be a startling reversal of traditional interpretations of Mann's impact on the school system in the state. Upon closer examination of the data, Vinovskis noted that most of the decline in the rate of attendance came in the group of children under four and that the attendance record of children between four and sixteen, the category on which Mann had focused his efforts, actually increased. The reputation of Horace Mann on this point seemed safe.[70] But the observation had raised interesting questions about public attitudes towards the rearing and training of young children in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Vinovskis's data revealed that for the earliest period when relatively reliable school attendance data are available, a surprisingly large percentage of children under four were attending schools. In 1840 at <u>least</u> ten percent of the children under four were in school state-wide and many localities had a much higher percentage attending.[71]

INSERT GRAPH #6

3087/4

PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ATTENDING MASSACHUSETTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS 1840-1860

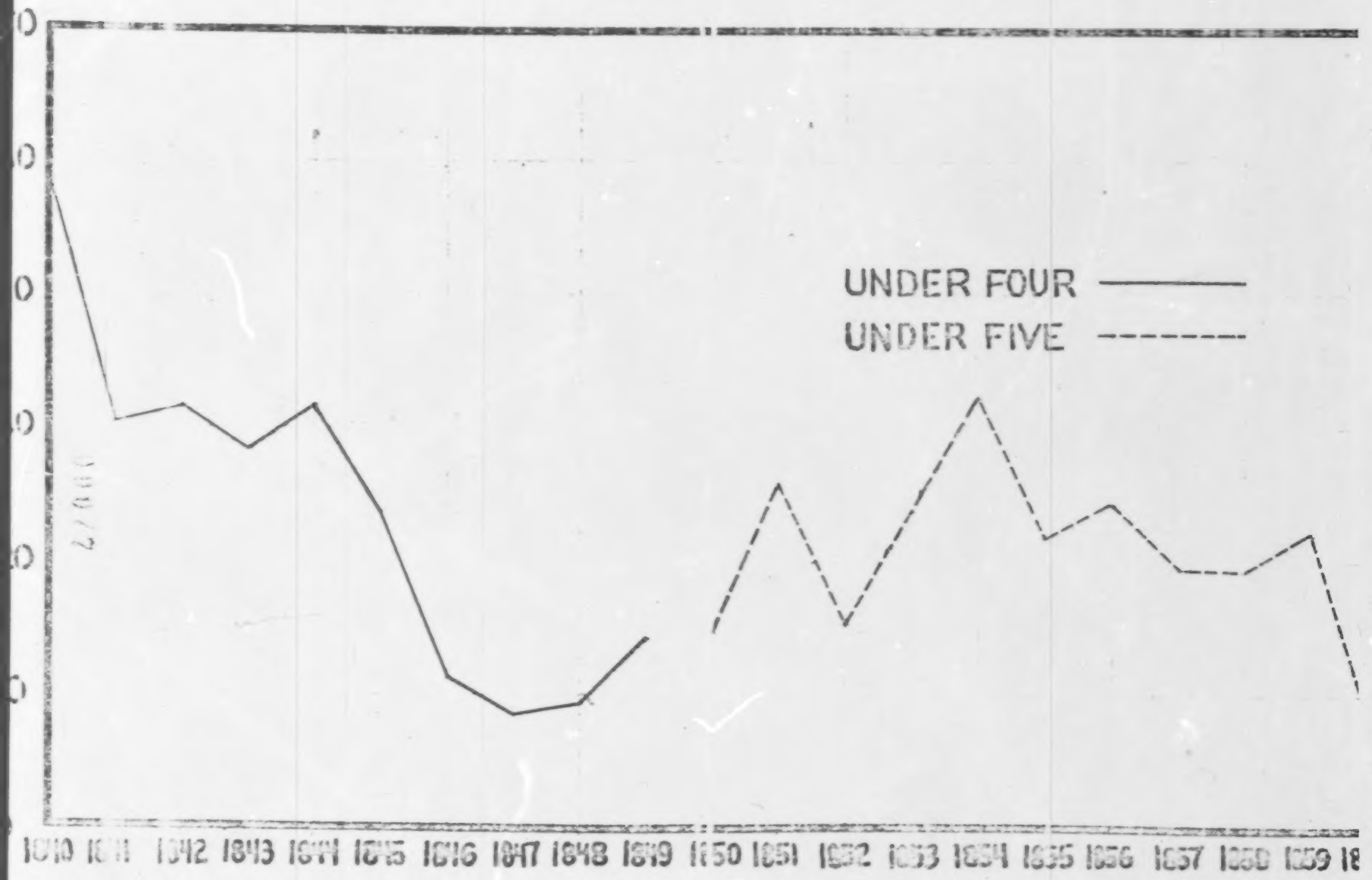


As the above graph illustrates, not only was there a high percentage of young children attending schools in the 1840's and 1850's state-wide, but that there was a steady decrease during those decades. The level and the rate of decline were even more dramatic in particular communities such as Concord.

INSERT GRAPH #7

The dramatic change in the ages at which parents chose to send their children to school in the decade between 1840 and 1850 suggested to us that attitudinal changes towards young children, their place in society, and their aptitudes might lay behind statistical record. Accordingly we began to search the earliest possible Massachusetts educational journals to see if there was explicit discussion of infancy and the role of infants in public education. In general there was very little mention of the public education of very young children. But there were some hints that in the 1820's there might have been a major shift in the attitudes toward sending young children to schools. William Russell mentioned in 1826 that "within a few years public sentiment has undergone a favorable change on the subject of early education."[72] We noticed also occasional references to the Boston practice of accepting children in primary schools as early as four years as being quite unusual. The Sabbath school movement practice of accepting children no younger than age five was further evidence for the supposition that the sending of children to schools at ages younger than four was not a common practice. It was then that we began to consider the possibility that the flurry of intense devotion to the cause of educating children as early as possible generated by the infant school movement might bear a relationship to the large numbers of children under four attending public schools in the 1840's and that some of the causes which led to the abrupt decline in enthusiasm for infant education among reformers in the mid-1830's might be related to the later

PERCENTAGE OF YOUNG CHILDREN ATTENDING CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 1841-1860



gradual decline in public practice of sending infants to school in the late 1840's and 1850's.

Our hypothesis suggested, in fact, that the reformers who pushed the cause of infant education in the 1820's and 1830's might have been more effective than the abrupt and early end of the institutions they created would suggest. Unfortjnately, there is almost no data currently available to test this hypothesis. However, we were successful in obtaining data from one Concord primary school that leads us to suggest very tentatively for the present that the practice of sending infants into public schools may have been influenced by the infant school movement in areas where this practice was not banned outright by law.

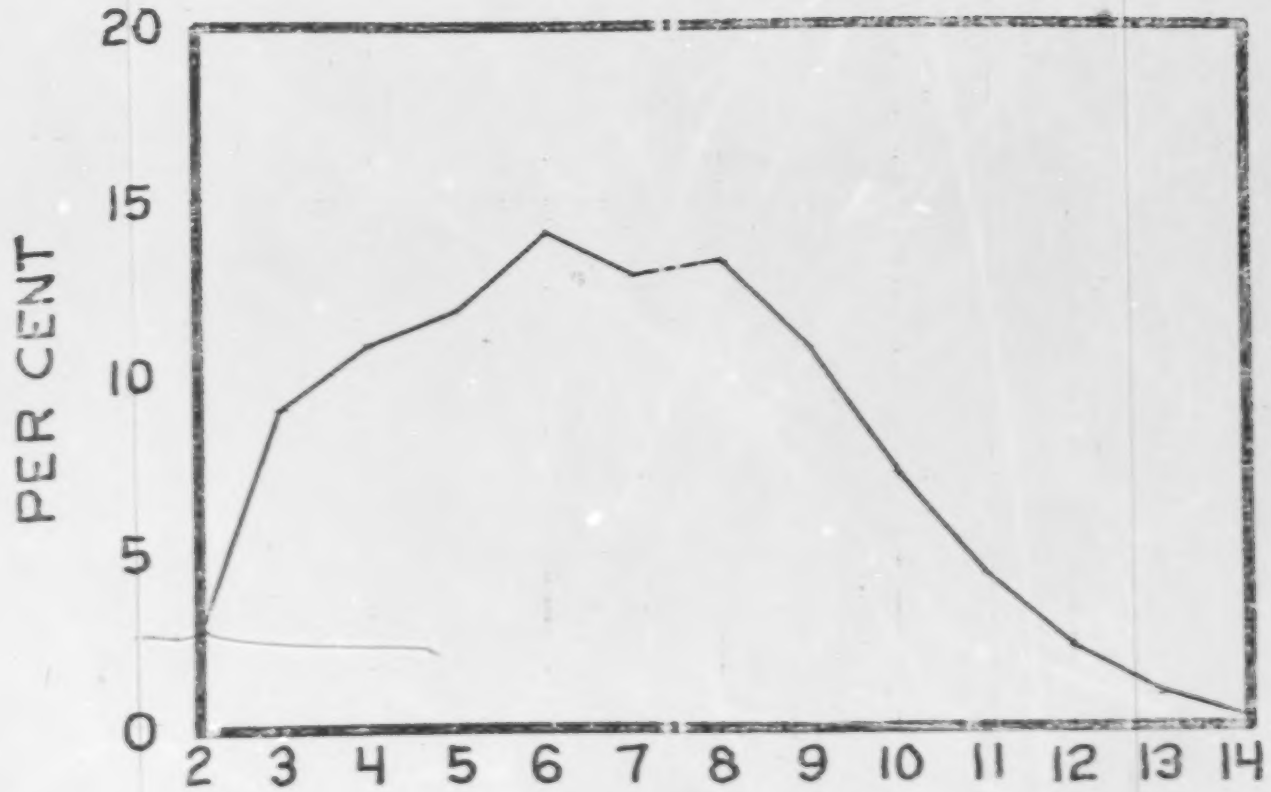
Teachers in the East Centre District School for the Concord school system kept a record of the names, dates of admission and withdrawal, parentage, ages, days attended, and days absent of all of their pupils over a twelve year period extending from 1830 to 1842. It has thus been possible for us to analyze this data in order to get at least one small glimpse into the public practices in sending children to school for a full decade before reliable school reports on the attendance of young children is available for most Massachusetts towns.[73]

Graph #8 shows an age distribution of the children attending the East Centre District School from 1830-1842:

INSERT GRAPH #8

As we can see from the above graph, a sizable percentage of the children enrolled were under the age of four. We would like to examine changes over time in the percentage of children under four in the East Centre District School but we are handicapped by the lack of any idea of how many children under four were expected to be served by this particular school. Another method of getting an estimate of changes over time would be to calculate the percentage of children under four in that school during this period.

AGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN CONCORD EAST CENTRE DISTRICT SCHOOL, 1830-1842



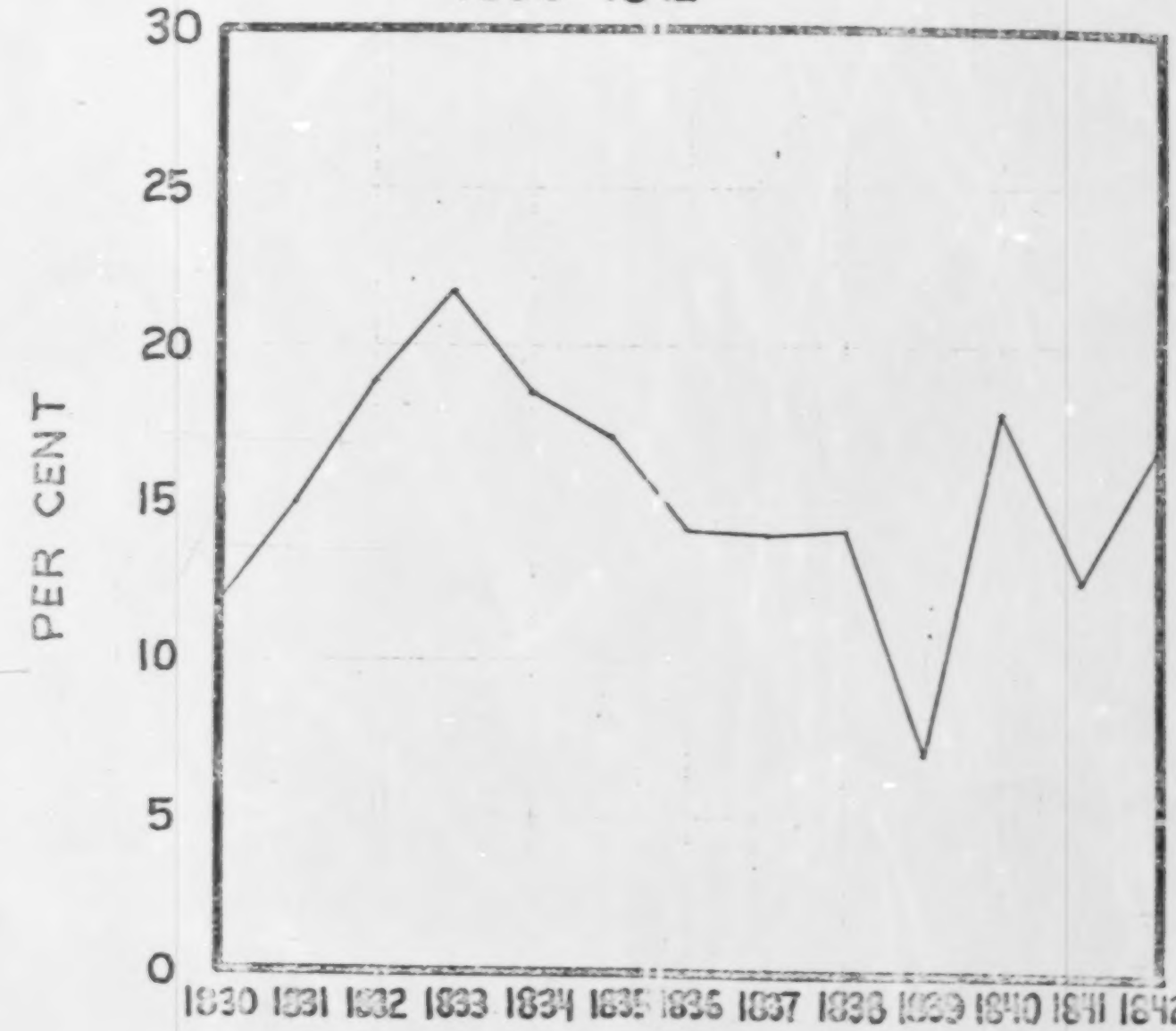
However, there is some danger that the total population of the school is a misleading base figure as there was no set age at which one entered the Concord grammar schools. As a result, if there was any changing pattern in the ages at which they entered the grammar school, it would distort our results. Consequently, it was decided to use instead the percentage children attending the East Centre under four were of all students under nine as this age cutoff would minimize our chances of making a miscalculation.

INSERT GRAPH #9

Graph #10 shows that the percentage of students under four of all students under nine in the Concord East Centre District School was following an upward trend in 1830 at the time the data begins. A steady rise in the percentage of students under four continued to a peak in 1833 of nearly twenty-two percent. It will be noticed that this peak year is the same year that Amariah Brigham's book was published in Boston; and that there after an erratic, though obvious decline occurred until we lose the data in 1842 (though the same trend continues for the town as a whole---see Graph #8). We have no satisfactory explanation for the erratic changes in the percentage of students under four between 1838 and 1841 and we are well aware of the dangers of over-generalizing from one case, especially when the total number of pupils in any given year was usually under 100. However, the data we have presented on Concord is the only real data currently available on enrollment practices of young children before 1840. On the basis of this limited statistical data and the few literary references we have on this issue, we would like to offer a tentative hypothesis of the effect of infant schools on the school enrollment behavior of the general public.

The infant school idea of sending children to school at ages younger than had been previously the practice did gradually influence the general public thoughout the state. This was

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS UNDER FOUR OF ALL STUDENTS UNDER NINE IN THE CONCORD EAST CENTRE DISTRICT SCHOOL 1830-1842



probably particularly true in towns like Concord that had infant schools established within them though we suspect that the general attitude penetrated into areas which had not set up such schools. The impact of the arguments against sending young children to school, which was felt so sharply in Boston was less pronounced in outlying areas. The common people were not as responsive to new intellectual currents as were the well-to-do citizens of Boston. A decline in the practice of sending young children to school did occur, but as a secular trend it was very slow to return to the level of such practice in 1830. It lingered through the 40's and gradually died out in response to the formalization of public school system regulations, which eventually set lower limits on ages of admission. This probably resulted from a disinclination upon the part teachers themselves to tolerate the extra attention and special techniques required to keep the youngest children from disrupting the work of the older children. But the almost total absence of discussion of what the lowest ages of admission to schools should be makes such hypotheses little more than guesses. The absence of such discussion is itself evidence that the attentions of the Horace Mann generation of educational reformers were focused upon upgrading the upper levels of the school system. They were simply not as concerned about the problems of the young child first entering the school system

XIV. THE TRANSITION TO THE KINDERGARTEN: A POSTSCRIPT

The 1860's and 1870's saw a resurgence of interest in early education. This interest drew its impetus from the writings of Friedrich Froebel, a student of Pestalozzi's, who had visited Yverdun while the great master was still alive and who in 1840 began his own infant school which he christened with the felicitous name, Kindergarten. The Kindergarten spread rapidly in America, achieving a degree of establishment which the infant school movement had not even approached. In 1871 a report was

made to the Boston School Committee on the subject of kindergartens which could easily have come from the pen of William Russell four decades earlier:

> Froebel's system is really nature's system, first discovered and promulagated by him, not in words, but in practical processes, by which the child is made happy and healthy in its instruction, by which its bodily activity is utilized, and its mental grasp strengthened, without straining the brain with abstract objects of thought. As the child is attracted to see their differences and their resemblances; he becomes acquainted with their qualities and properties....
>
> What, to the child, seems pure play, is really a plan of gradual, simple instruction, not antagonistic to his every impulse; and his school-going becomes a pleasure, instead of the old-time dread and repulsion.... We aim at the harmonious development of the whole being,---the three-fold nature, physical, intellectual and spiritual, of the child. We teach him to use his own powers. With us, results are seen in the improvement of the children, not in the amount of work they do.[74]

It cannot be said with confidence, at this stage in our study, why the Kindergarten movement flourished while the infant school movement declined. There was little difference in the principles or techniques of the two systems. In fact, David Salmon, in his Infant Schools, Their History and Theory, treats the Kindergarten as a part of the movement which had begun at New Lanark. In America the connection seems to have been completely forgotten.[75] One immediately thinks of the great influx of immigration which had taken place since the 1830's and the possibility that educators felt a more pressing need to find a means of acculturating the children of immigrants into American society than they felt in the 1830's. One also suspects that the magnitude of the problems due to poverty, urbanization, and industrialization were much more severe than in the 1830's. Also, by 1870 the cause of public education had a wide following and a strong professional bureaucracy to support it. There was

not the ambiguity over responsibility for public education and objectives of educational innovation which had characterized the Boston infant movement of the 1830's. In addition, it is significant that the kindergartens took children no younger than three years of age, thus mitigating the threat to the home and family implicit in the infant education movement. But ultimately, one suspects, the leaven of the continental tradition of educational reform had by 1870 time to do its work. The theories and techniques recommended by kindergarten advocates and the conceptions of infancy from which they came were not as alien to the American mind in 1870 as they were in 1830. And perhaps there was much to Froebel's fortunate choice of a name for his institution. A garden seems an entirely appropriate place for even the youngest of children. A school does not.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Boston Recorder and Scriptual Transcript, July 9, 1829.

[2] David Salmon and Winifred Hindshaw, Infant Schools: Their History and Theory (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1904), pp. 8, 17. Salmon and others refer to Jean Frédéric Oberlin (1767-1826) who founded several schools for the children of Alsatian peasants in the last quarter of the 18th century. Oberlin's work was not continued, however, and Owen's infant school was the model for later infant schools on the Continent as well as in England and America. For Owen's account of the founding of the infant school at New Lanark, see his autobiography (first published in 1858), The Life of Robert Owen by Himself (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1920), pp. 191-212.

[3] Samuel Wilderspin (1792-1866) gave an extensive account of the founding of the first infant schools in London in his Infant Education; or Remarks on the Importance of Educating the Infant Poor, from the Age of Eighteen Months to Seven Years (3rd edition, London: J.S. Hodson, 1825), pp. 8-40. Pages 17-40 contain a verbatim account of the founding meeting. A list of infant schools functioning in 1825 is found on page 284. Wilderspin was instructor of the second infant school founded in London and became self-appointed apostle of the movement, traveling extensively throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland promoting the establishment of infant schools. His Infant Education was probably the most widely read of all infant school manuals.

[4] An account of plans for an infant school in Hartford, Connecticut is reprinted from the Hartford Observer in the Boston Recorder and Scriptual Transcript, February 22, 1827. The Recorder enthusiastically reported founding the infant schools in Philadelphia on February 1st and 5th, 1828. The American Journal of Education, III (June 1828), 346-56 reported the founding of the Infant School Society of the City of New York.

5 The most complete account of the founding of the Infant School Society of the City of Boston is in the Boston Recorder and Religious Telegraph, April 18, 1828. The open ing of an infant school by the Infant School Society of the City of Boston is reported in the First Annual Report of that society (Boston: T.R. Marvin, 1829), pp. 7-8. The Salem Street infant school, opened the same month under Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888), was sponsored by another infant school society. The little we have been able to find concerning this latter society is described on pages 17 and 18 of the text. Alcott left the Salem Street school to found a private infant school of his own in October 1828, as described in Dorothy McCuskey, Bronson Alcott, Teacher (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1940), pp. 51-54. Reference to the opening of other infant schools in Boston and in Massachusetts is made in the Infant School Society of the City of Boston, Third Annual Report (Boston, 1831), p. 9. Further references to reports of this society will be designated Infant School Society, Nth Annual Report, 18__. Scattered references to infant schools in other Massachusetts towns have been found in several sources, especially the American Journal of Education and in occasional surviving annual reports of the societies which sponsored the schools. Ladies' Magazine, published in Boston under the editorship of Sarah J. Hale from January 1828 to December 1836 was unusually attentive to the progress of infant schools. They reported on the Aftrican infant school in vol. 3 (may 1830), p. 239 and (October 1830), p. 485.

6 The most striking example is Elizabeth Palmer Peabody. Through her association with Alcott she was actively involved in the infant school movement in the 1830's. Yet, when she became a leader in the Kindergarten movement in the 1860's she made few explicit references to her earlier experiences and did not stress the obvious similarities and common antecedents of the two movements. For an analysis of her career, see Ruth M. Baylor, Elizabeth Palmer

Peabody: Kindergarten Pioneer (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1965).

7 Hugh M. Pollard, Pioneers of Popular Education, 1760-1850 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957) provides a good summary of the contribution of these figures to modern educational theory.

8 A series of letters from Pestalozzi to one of his English disciples, J.P. Greaves, emphasizing this point, were published in London the year of Pestalozzi's death, 1827, and frequently reprinted in both England and America during the rest of the century. See Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, Letters on Early Education (Syracuse, N.Y.: C.W. Bardeen, 1898).

9 A most competent and useful study of the early 19th century emphasis upon the mother in education is found in Ann L. Kunn, The Mother's Role in Childhood Education: New England Concepts, 1830-1860 ("Yale University Studies in Religious Education, Vol. XIX; New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1947).

10 Hugh M. Pollard, in Pioneers of Popular Education, pp. 133-45, reviews the state of popular education in Britain in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

11 From the "First Essay" of Robert Owen's A New View of Society, first published in 1813. Quoted from Robert Owen on Education, ed. Harold Silber (Cambridge: The University Press, 1969), p. 76.

12 Robert Owen, The Addresses of Robert Owen (London, 1830), p. 40. Wilderspin, in his Infant Education, 3rd edition, pp. 39-40 lists the 1824 subscribers to the Infant School Society. Other notables included William Wilberforce, J.S. Mill and T.R. Malthus.

13 Pestalozzi, Letters on Early Education, p. 10.

[14] See Wilderspin's Infant Education, 3rd edition, pp. 17-40 for a verbatim account of the discussions which led to the founding of the Infant School Society in London.

[15] Frank Luther Mott, A History of American Magazines, 1741-1850 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p. 490.

[16] "Prospectus," American Journal of Education, I (January 1826), 4-6.

[17] Russell's close friend and colleague, Amos Bronson Alcott, contributed to the infant education movement as instructor of infant schools and as author of an important tract Observations on the Principles and Methods of Infant Education (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1830). His primary activity was as instructor rather than publicist, however, and his opinions as to the objectives of instruction quickly became so idiosyncratic as to limit his influence upon the broader movement. The purpose of educating young children became for Alcott to elicit the spiritual nature of those who in point of time he thought to be closest of all men to undefiled spirit. In encouraging the free expression of the infant mind he was a practioner and advocate of continental theory. But while he promoted the methods of the continental theorists his objectives were almost wholly theological---to better understand the nature of spiritual existence. His schools were founded not so much as institutions to better instruct children as to better instruct himself in eternal truths. Thus his contribution to the infant education movement was not so significant as that of William Russell and we have not treated him as a major figure in this study. For a discussion of Alcott's relationship to the infant education movement, see Odell Shepherd, Pedlar's Progress: The Life of Bronson Alcott (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1937), pp. 120-35.

[18] William Russell, The Introductory Discourse and Lectures [illegible]

Friends of Education to Form the American Institute of Instruction, August 1830 (Boston: Hilliard, Gray, Little and Wilkins, 1831), p. 101.

19 "Prospectus," American Journal of Education, I (January 1826), 6.

20 See footnotes 4 and 5.

21 Russell's announcement is in the American Journal of Education, III (June 1828), 383. A profile of the Trinitarian community of the Boston of this period emerges from J. Leslie Dunstan's useful A Light to the City: 150 Years of the City Missionary Society of Boston, 1816-1966 (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

22 Boston Society for the Religious and Moral Instruction of the Poor, 3rd Annual Report, p. 22. Hereafter cited as Boston Society for the ...Poor, Nth Annual Report.

23 Boston Society for the ... Poor, 3rd Annual Report, p. 11.

24 Boston Society for the ... Poor, 7th Annual Report, p. 9.

25 Boston Society for the ... Poor, 13th Annual Report, p. 4.

26 For a discussion of urban development during this period, see Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Ante-bellum Urbanization in the American Northeast," The Journal of Economic History, XXV (December 1965), 592-608. On the growth of Boston in particular, see Peter R. Knights, The Plain People of Boston, 1830-1860: A Study in City Growth (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971) and for a critique of some of that book's statistical analysis, see Maris A. Vinovskis's review of it in the Journal of Interdisciplinary History (forthcoming).

27 For a general introduction to the problems of Boston during this period, see Oscar Handlin, Boston's Immigrants: A Study in Acculturation (rev. edition; New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 1-24. Though Boston experienced many of the same social problems as New

York and Philadelphia, living conditions in Boston were probably significantly better than in the other two cities before 1860. Maris A. Vinovskis, "Mortality Trends in Massachusetts Before 1860," Journal of Economic History, XXXII, No, 1 (1972), 184-213.

28 See Graph No. 3.

29 Most scholars agree that poverty was less prevalent in America than in England in the first half of the nineteenth century. However, there is considerable debate on whether there was an increase or decrease in the amount of poverty in America. For instance, Raymond Mohl argues that there was an intensification of poverty in northern cities at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Raymond A. Mohl, Poverty in New York, 1783-1825 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 3-34. Unfortunately, we do not have adequate quantitative studies of the level or the extent of poverty in nineteenth century America to arrive at any definitive judgment at this time. However, it is unlikely that the increases in the levels or the extent of poverty in American cities before 1840 was of such a large magnitude that they by themselves account for the sudden increased interest in this subject by social reformers. Rather, we suspect that the growing belief in the early nineteenth century that poverty was not inevitable in all societies led social reformers as well as the general public to become more aware of and interested in solving the problems of urban poverty.

30 Carroll Rosenberg dates this shift in attitudes toward the poor in the 1820's and 1830's in New York City. Carroll Smith Rosenberg, Religion and the Rise of the American City: The New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971). Redmond Barnett's analysis of the poor in Massachusetts locates this shift between 1812 and 1820. Redmond Barnett, "From Philanthropy to Social Reform" (forthcoming Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University).

31 Samuel Wilderspin, Infant Education, 3rd edition, pp. 196-97.

We have not been able to determine the source of Wilderspin's data.

32 Boston Society for the ... Poor, 17th Annual Report, p. 7.

33 Roger Lane's investigation of the development of the Boston police found little evidence of a high level of crime in Boston during this period. In fact, before the 1830's Bostonians were content to rely upon constables and watchmen for their safety and it was only after the inability of the police to handle the anti-Catholic mob violence that a new and more professional police force was recruited. Roger Lane, Policing the City: Boston, 1822-1885 (New York: Atheneum, 1971), pp. 3-58.

34 Caroline F. Ware, Early New England Cotton Manufacture: A Study in Industrial Beginnings (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966); Norman Ware, The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860: The Reaction of American Industrial Society to the Advance of the Industrial Revolution (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924).

35 Handlin, op. cit., pp. 9-11.

36 Joseph Tuckerman, Prize Essay on the Wages Paid to Females (Philadelphia, 1830).

37 Handlin, op. cit., pp. 25-177.

38 Irish Catholics in Boston were particularly anxious to control the education of their own children as they felt the public schools were run according to Protestant values and beliefs. Handlin, op. cit., pp. 124-177.

39 We are not arguing that social conditions played no role what-so-ever in the development of infant schools. Rather, we are saying that the primary thrust for infant schools came from the educational reformers who desired to try out the new teaching techniques and found a group of willing social reformers. Though undoubtedly these social reformers were aware and concerned about the

social conditions in Boston, the conditions there weren't so bad that they had gone out actively seeking some drastic means to solve these problems as their London counterparts had done.

40 Infant School Society, 5th Annual Report, 1833, p. 6.

41 Ladies' Magazine, III (April 1830), 189.

42 Infant School Society, 1st Annual Report, 1829, pp. 7-8.

43 Ladies' Magazine, II (February 1829), 89-90.

44 Boston Recorder and Scriptual Transcript, June 18, 1829.

45 Ladies' Magazine, II (July 1829), 338-39.

46 William Russell, Address on Infant Schools (Boston: Tupper, 1829), p. 5.

47 William Russell, Address on Infant Schools, p. 13.

48 Joseph M. Wightman, Annals of the Boston Primary School Committee (Boston: G.C. Rand and Avery, 1860), pp. 123, 125.

49 See John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly, XVII (1965), 656-681, for an insightful overview of pre-war reform. Thomas' emphasis upon the tendency of the Romantic reformers to place their hopes for reform in moral regeneration of the individual rather than in established institutions is supported by our study. Though the social reform group we have studied, in fostering infant schools was creating a new institution, the schools were expected to be the institution to end all institutions. As the quotations on the title page and page 28 and 38 clearly indicate, the infant schools, giving proper moral instruction to the children of unregenerate parents at the earliest possible age, and insulating the children as much as possible from the harmful influences of improper homes and corrupting street life, were expected to eventually eliminate the need for all other reform

institutions. The underlying attitude towards the possibility that existing institutions would bring about fundamental reform is profoundly skeptical.

50 William Russell, Address on Infant Schools, p. 4.

51 Amos Bronson Alcott, Observations on the Principles and Methods of Infant Instruction (Boston: Carter and Hendee, 1830), pp. 26-27.

52 For an analysis of Josiah Quincy's policies during this period, see Robert A. McCaughey, "Josiah Quincy, 1772-1864: The Last of the Boston Federalists" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1970).

53 Ladies' Magazine, III (April 1830), 140.

54 Pestalozzi, Letters on Early Education, pp. 11-12.

55 William Wilson, A Manual of Instruction for Infants' Schools; etc., Adapted for Infants' Schools in the United States by H. Wm. Edwards (New York: G. & C. & H. Carville, 1830), pp. 30-31. Wilson's manual was the most carefully reasoned of all the infant manuals, and the manual most thoroughly and consistently grounded in Pestalozzian theory. One change made for the American edition seems significant. All mention of infant schools as being primarily for children of the poor was systematically deleted from the original English edition. This would suggest that the idea of infant schools had spread sufficiently to middle and upper classes that the revisors did not wish to limit the market for their book by suggesting that it was primarily for the poor. Or it could possibly have indicated a desire on the part of the revisors to make the infant school idea more attractive to middle and upper classes and thus insure that they would support the institutions as advantageous to their own children as well as to the poor. The deletion is a striking departure from the tenure of James Carnegie's earlier (1827) Infant Education: or Remarks on the Importance of Educating

the Infant Poor, etc., which Miss Bethune had anonymously signed, "By a friend to the poor."

56 Infant School Society, 1st Annual Report, 1829, p. 9.

57 Infant School Society, 5th Annual Report, 1833, pp. 5-6.

58 Ladies' Magazine, II (1829), 89-90.

59 Ladies' Magazine, III (May 1830), 224.

60 Ladies' Magazine, V (April 1832), 180.

61 Infant School Society, 3rd Annual Report, 1831, p. 12.

62 A detailed discussion of the regimen at Hofwyl can be found in Hugh M. Pollard's Pioneers of Popular Education, pp. 42-52.

63 "Education of Infants," American Annals of Education, I (May 1830), 204.

64 "Infant Education," American Annals of Education, I (August 1830), 355-56.

65 Amariah Brigham, Remarks on the Influence of Mental Cultivation and Mental Excitement upon Health (Hartford: F.J. Huntington, 1832), p. iii. The preface of this first edition was reprinted without change in the Boston: Marsh, Capen & Lyon, 1833, 2nd edition, p. vii.

66 Ladies' Magazine, VII (February 1834), 79.

67 Infant School Society, 7th Annual Report, 1835, p. 79.

68 J. Leslie Dunstan, op. cit., p. 82.

69 Infant School and Children's Home Association, First Annual Report (Boston: Arthur W. Locke & Co., 1870).

70 Albert Fishlow, "The Antebellum Common School Revival: Fact or Fancy?" in Industrialization in Two Systems: Essays in Honor of

Alexander Gerschenkron, ed. Henry Rosovsky (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1968), pp. 40-67; Maris A. Vinovskis, "Trends in Education in Massachusetts, 1826-1860," Journal of Educational History (forthcoming).

71 When Mann first inaugurated the procedure of requiring school committees to report the number of children under four in school in 1840, many of the school committees were unable to give information on this question because they had not required their teachers to keep sufficiently detailed records. Unfortunately, when Mann reported the number of children under four in his annual report, he did not make the distinction between towns which were able to provide information on this question and those that were unable to because of inadequate records. Therefore, calculating the percentage of children under four in 1840 who were attending school from Mann's annual report underestimates that figure. An examination of the manuscript local returns for 1840 indicates that the actual percentage of children under four in school in 1840 would be about thirteen per cent rather than the ten per cent figure based on Mann's annual report for 1840. Most local school committees immediately remedied their lack of information on this question by 1841 so that the number of children under four reported by Mann is a very good estimate of the actual number of children in that age-group in school after 1840. For a further discussion of the problems of Massachusetts school data, see Maris A. Vinovskis, "Trends in Education in Massachusetts, 1826-1860," Journal of Educational History (forthcoming).

72 "Prospectus," American Journal of Education, I (January 1826), p. 6.

73 We would like to thank the Concord Free Public Library for permission to use the manuscript records of the East Centre District School and we are indebted to Mrs. William Henry Moss, Reference Librarian of the Concord Free Public Library, for her invaluable help and guidance.

74 Boston School Committee, "Report on the Subject of a Kindergarten School, March 14, 1871," pp. 3-8.

75 Marvin Lazerson's Origin of the Urban School provides important insights into public education in Massachusetts between 1870 and 1915. In dealing with the kindergarten movement however, he has apparently followed the lead of its nineteenth-century promoters, failing to notice that four decades earlier the founders of infant schools had sought to employ early education as an instrument of urban social reform. Especially puzzling, in view of the widespread attention to early education in the 1830's (of which infant schools were only one expression), is Lazerson's assertion that "not until the end of the nineteenth century did American educators generally acknowledge the importance of the early years in shaping adult behavior." See Marvin Lazerson, Origins of the Urban School; Public Education in Massachusetts, 1870-1915 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971) p. 41. For a fuller discussion of this issue see Dean May's forthcoming review of Lazerson's book in The Family in Historical Perspective.

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